NATION

If you've fundamental rights, so do the people, SC tells ED

≫ Page: 4 ≪

BUSINESS

Markets rise nearly 2% as US suspends tariffs on India

≫ Page: 7 ≪

SPORTS

Pooran will have a Siraj riddle to solve

≫ Page: 8 ≪

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SALAR

DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

سالار روزنامہ بنگلور

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Nations impose carbon emission tax on ships

LONDON, 11 APRIL

Major shipping nations have reached a historic agreement to impose a global tax of USD 100 per tonne of carbon dioxide emitted by ships not already offset by national contributions to the International Maritime Organisation's (IMO) net-zero fund. This landmark decision marks the first global tax on greenhouse gas emissions in the shipping industry, set to take effect by 2028. The agreement was reached during a meeting of the IMO, with the United States notably absent. While some environmental groups hailed the move as a significant step towards reducing emissions—currently responsible for 3 per cent of global emissions—others cautioned that it does not adequately address all emissions. *—PTI*

IMD issues red alert as dust storm hits Delhi; 1 dead

NEW DELHI, 11 APRIL

The national capital saw a sudden change in weather on Friday evening as strong dust storms and gusty winds hit the city, prompting the Met department to warn of adverse weather conditions in the coming hours and issue a red alert for Delhi-NCR. The India Meteorological Department (IMD) said a dust storm followed by a thunderstorm, accompanied by light to moderate rainfall, lightning and gusty winds reaching speeds of 40-80 kmph, is expected later in the evening. At least three were injured and one person died in the storm. More than 15 flight were diverted from the Indira Gandhi Airport. *—PTI*

Security kill terrorist in J&K's Kishtwar

JAMMU, 11 APRIL

A terrorist was killed during an encounter with security forces in Kishtwar district, Jammu and Kashmir, on Friday, as operations continue to locate a group of militants in Udhampur district. The encounter in Kishtwar stemmed from an intelligence-led joint operation by the Army and Jammu and Kashmir Police in the Chatru forest area. The Army's White Knight Corps reported that one terrorist was neutralised, while others remain active. The slain terrorist was reportedly linked to the Saifullah module responsible for a July 2024 ambush that resulted in the deaths of army personnel. Following a brief firefight on Wednesday in Naidgam, significant search operations were launched in Udhampur's Jopher-Marta forests, where two to three terrorists are believed to be hiding. *—PTI*

Union Home Minister Amit Shah with AIADMK general secretary Edappadi K Palaniswami and Tamil Nadu BJP President K Annamalai during a press conference, in Chennai on Friday **PHOTO: PTI**

AIADMK, BJP join hands for 2026 TN polls; Annamalai out

AIADMK's Palaniswami to lead campaign

CHENNAI, 11 APRIL

The BJP and AIADMK on Friday sealed a poll alliance, with Union Minister Amit Shah declaring that the 2026 Tamil Nadu Assembly election will be fought under the leadership of AIADMK chief Edappadi K Palaniswami.

With the parties rekindling their alliance nearly two years after they parted ways, Shah said it will be Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership at the Centre and Palaniswami at the state level.

"AIADMK and BJP have decided to fight next year's polls together. From 1998, AIADMK has been part of BJP alliance (at different points of time). PM Modi and late Chief Minister J Jayalalithaa had worked for Centre-state ties," Shah told a press conference, flanked by Palaniswami and outgoing BJP TN chief K Annamalai.

"We will form a government together led by Edappadi Palaniswami," he said, indicating it would be a coalition government should the NDA win.

When asked about AIADMK's divergent stand on certain issues, Shah said the parties will work together to resolve the differences. There will be a Common Minimum Programme if required, he said.

Meanwhile, Nainar Nagendran - a former AIADMK leader who joined the BJP in 2017 is set to become the new state BJP chief. He is set to take over from Annamalai. Nagendran was the only candidate to file a nomination.

—PTI

>>>More on Page 3

- AIADMK and BJP had been allies since 1998 at various points in time. Their last alliance tore in 2023 after the AIADMK reportedly took offence to comments made by Annamalai

REPORT IN TWO MONTHS

K'taka sets up SIT to probe BJP's 40% commissions

BENGALURU, 11 APRIL

The Karnataka Cabinet on Friday decided to set up a Special Investigation Team to probe the 40 per cent commission allegations against the previous BJP government in the state, in the light of Justice Nagmohan Das Commission inquiry report.

The SIT will complete the investigation in two months and submit the report to the state government, Karnataka Law and Parliamentary Affairs Minister HK Patil told reporters.

Subsequently, the probe report will be presented in the cabinet meeting.

Patil said the money released was more than the sanctioned amount, no objection certificate was issued out of turn, and there were meddling with the tender process.

"The SIT will include experts from the field. It will look into the whole gamut and not just 1,729 samples taken by Justice Nagamohan Das," the Minister said.

According to the Minister, out of three lakh works, Justice Nagamohan Das report took a sample of 1,729 works and conducted inquiry.

Patil said the money released was more than the sanctioned amount, no objection certificate was issued out of turn, and there were meddling with the tender process.

Govt issues draft notification on minimum wages

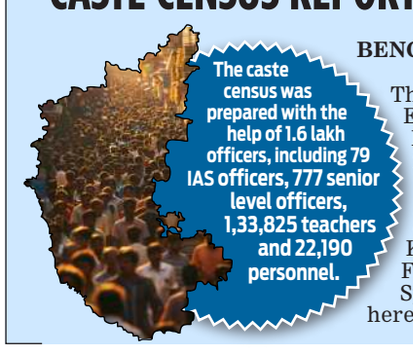
According to the draft notification, sanitation workers will be get a minimum of Rs 989 a day and Rs 21,251.30 a month.

Highly skilled electricians will be entitled for a daily wage of Rs 1,316.36 per day and Rs 34,225.42 per month. Skilled electricians will be entitled for a daily wage of Rs 1,196.69 and Rs 31,114.02 per month. Semi-skilled electricians will get Rs 1,087.90 per day and Rs 28,285.47 per month, while unskilled electricians will get Rs 989 a day and Rs 25,714.07 per month.

In the foundries, the highly skilled workers in zone-1 will be get for Rs 1,316.36 wages a and Rs 34,225.42 a month. In zone-2, they will get Rs 1,196.69 a day and Rs 31,114.02 a month and Rs 1087.90 a day and Rs 28285.47 per month in zone 3. For unskilled workers the daily wage will be Rs 989 in zone-1, Rs 899 in zone-2 and Rs 817.35 in zone-3. *—PTI*

>>>More on Page 2

CASTE CENSUS REPORT TABLED IN KARNATAKA CABINET


The caste census was prepared with the help of 1.6 lakh officers, including 79 IAS officers, 777 senior level officers, 1,33,825 teachers and 22,190 personnel.

BENGALURU, 11 APRIL

The much-awaited Socio-Economic and Education Survey report, popularly known as the "caste census," was presented before the Karnataka cabinet on Friday.

Speaking to reporters here, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah said, "Some ministers said they want to go through the recommendations first. For this reason, there will be a cabinet meeting on 17 April."

The survey report was submitted to CM Siddaramaiah by Karnataka State Commission for Backward Classes Chairman K Jayaprakash Hegde in February last year. *—PTI*

PHOTO: FREEPIK

China retaliates with 125% tariffs against US

BEIJING, 11 APRIL

China on Friday raised its additional tariffs on imports from the US to 125 per cent in retaliation to the Trump administration's 145 per cent levies on Chinese exports.

The Chinese Commerce Ministry, raising the levies from the previous 84 per cent, said it also filed a lawsuit with the WTO following the US tariff hikes.

Chinese President Xi Jinping appealed to the European Union (EU) to "jointly resist the unilateral bullying" by Washington.

"There is no winner in a tariff war, and going against the world will only result in self-isolation", Xi said in his first comments since Trump began imposing tariffs on China and a host of other countries.

In his meeting with Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez, Xi called on China and the EU to fulfill their international responsibilities, work together to safeguard economic globalisation and the international trading environment, and jointly resist unilateral bullying, state-run Xinhua news agency reported.

"China and the EU are firm supporters of economic globalisation and free trade," Xi said.

This safeguards the legitimate rights and interests of China and the EU and serves to maintain fairness and justice, Xi said, adding that China is still open to holding talks with the US.

—PTI

>>>More on Page 6

NIA says Rana likely devised similar plans for other cities

NEW DELHI, 11 APRIL

The National Investigation Agency on 10 April argued in a Delhi court that it suspects Tahawwur Rana devised terror plots akin to 26/11 Mumbai attacks in multiple Indian cities.

Tahawwur Rana **PHOTO: X**

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) made the claim before special judge Chander Jit Singh, who remanded Rana to 18-day NIA custody.

During the arguments, the NIA said Rana's custody was required to piece together the full scope of the conspiracy, and submitted he was required to be taken to various locations for retracing the events that took place 17 years ago.

To piece together crucial evidence and retrace events from 17 years ago, officials might transport Rana to key locations, allowing them to reconstruct the crime scene and gain deeper insight into the larger terror network at play, the source added.

The judge directed the NIA to conduct medical examination of Rana every 24 hours, and allow him to meet his lawyer every alternate day.

The judge allowed Rana to use only a soft-tip pen and meet his lawyer in the presence of the NIA officials within an audible distance. *—PTI*

>>>More on Page 3

SC says CBI probe shouldn't be done in routine manner

NEW DELHI, 11 APRIL

The Supreme Court has set aside an order of the Punjab and Haryana High Court which transferred the probe in a case to the CBI, and said such directions should not be routinely passed.

A bench of Justices Sudhanshu Dhulia and K Vinod Chandran said that courts should direct for Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) probe only in cases where the material prima facie warranted an investigation by the agency.

"The high courts should direct for CBI investigation only in cases where material prima facie discloses something calling for an investigation by CBI and it should not be done in a routine manner or on the basis of some vague allegations," the bench said.

The top court went on, "The 'ifs' and 'buts' without any definite conclusion are not sufficient to put an agency like CBI into motion." *—PTI*

>>>More on Page 4

Samsung, Hitachi sue Indian govt over e-waste policy

NEW DELHI, 11 APRIL

Electronic companies like Daikin, Hitachi and Samsung are rattled by the Indian government's new rules, necessitating them to pay considerably higher to recycle electronic goods.

Four companies have reportedly sued Modi's government in New Delhi over these new measures.

These companies termed the measures as unconstitutional in a New Delhi court, adding that they increased compliance costs manifold.

A Reuters review of non-public court papers and letters to the government by an industry group representing Samsung and LG revealed the new rates have roughly tripled recycling costs. Hitachi, Daikin, Havells and Voltas each sued government earlier. *—Agencies*

PHOTO: FREEPIK

TORTURED AND ABUSED

60 Indians forced into 'cyber slavery' rescued from Myanmar, five arrested

PHOTOS: FREEPIK

MUMBAI, 11 APRIL

The cyber wing of Maharashtra Police rescued more than 60 Indian nationals who had been forced into cyber slavery in Myanmar and arrested five agents including a foreign national, an official said on Friday.

This is perhaps the biggest action taken by the Maharashtra Cyber in a cyber slavery case with the help of the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) and Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), he said.

Maharashtra Cyber along with other agencies recued the victims, the official said, without disclosing whether the operation was carried out inside Myanmar.

The racketeers contacted the victims through social media platforms and offered them high-paying jobs in Thailand and other East Asian countries, he said.

The agents arranged passports and flight tickets for the victims and sent them to Thailand on tourist visas. After landing in the country, they were sent to the Myanmar border where they were made to cross a river in small boats.

On entering Myanmar, the victims were taken to guarded compounds controlled by armed rebel groups where they were forced to commit cyber frauds ranging from `digital arrest' scams to fake investment schemes on an industrial scale.

In order to force the victims into cyber frauds, the accused persons used to torture them. In some cases, they would even pull out the nails of the victims.

The passports of the victims were seized, and they were subjected to torture and threats, he said.

"In case anybody refused to work, the accused persons would terrorise us with a gunman, who was deputed at the workplace, and torture us," Satish, one of the victims, said, adding some of them were even threatened with organ removal.

Manish Grey alias Maddy, Taisan alias Aaditya Ravi Chandran, Rupnarayan Ramdhar Gupta, Jensi Rani D and Chinese-Kazakhstani national Talaniti Nulaxi were arrested for allegedly acting as recruitment agents.

Grey is a professional actor who has appeared in web series and television shows, the official said. Along with others, Grey allegedly recruited unsuspecting individuals and facilitated their trafficking to Myanmar, he added.

Nulaxi was allegedly planning to set up a unit in India to commit cyber crimes, he said. *—PTI*

PHOTO: SALAR

Road accident kills 4, injures 3 in Yadgir

YADGIR, 11 ARPIL

Four from a village were killed and three others injured in a mishap between a jeep and Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation bus in Yadgir district on Thursday night.

Yadgir Superintendent of Police (SP) Prutvika Shankar told **Salar News** that the accident occurred near Maddaraki village near Shahapur in Yadgir taluk's National Highway 150A.

Yadgir Police Inspector Sharangouda Nyamannavar, in whose jurisdiction the accident occurred, said that based on the information provided by the survivors from the jeep the deceased have been identified as Sharanappa Onakuni, 30, Sunita Kavali, 19, Somawwa Balichakra, 55, and Tangamma Kavali, 60, all from Varkanahalli in Yadagiri taluk. The deceased and injured had hired the jeep to visit a neighbouring district's temple. *—Salar News*

After wife's death, man kills his 2 kids, ends own life

DAVANGERE, 11 APRIL

Depressed over the untimely death of his wife, a 32-year-old man died by suicide allegedly after killing his two children, police said on Friday. The incident occurred on Thursday in Gandhinagar police station limits. In his death note, Uday expressed his love for his wife and stated that he was joining his wife along with his children.

According to the police, in September last year, Uday's wife died of a heart attack. Following this, he apparently fell into depression. The two had fallen in love and got married in 2015. He had contemplated suicide even earlier, but concerns for his children had prevented him from taking such an extreme step, a senior police officer said. On Thursday, he allegedly strangled his four-year-old daughter and three-year-old son, and later died by suicide by hanging himself.

Help is available. Please call Tele Manas at 14416, SAHAI at 080-25497777 for support. —PTI

If asked for 'bribe', go to Lokayukta: DKS

Contractors dub Cong more corrupt than BJP

BENGALURU, 11 APRIL

Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar on Friday suggested that if anyone has demanded commission from contractors to pay their bills, then they should file a complaint with Lokayukta.

His reaction comes a day after the Karnataka State Contractors Association (KSCA) alleged that the menace of commission was now more severe than the previous BJP government.

They claimed that "unseen hands and brokers" were active in the offices of Shivakumar and two other senior Cabinet Ministers.

Responding to these allegations, Shivakumar denied involvement of ministers and said, "If anyone has asked for commission from contractors to pay bills, they should file a complaint with the Lokayukta. Our ministers Satish Jarkiholi and Boseraju are not involved in this."

Speaking to reporters at Vidhana Soudha, Shivakumar questioned why contractors should ask the minister regarding bill payment. "Are they (contractors) not aware of the department's budget? How did they take up the contract when there is no grant?"

Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar PHOTO: X/DKS

> **If anyone has asked for commission from contractors to pay bills, they should file a complaint with the Lokayukta. Our ministers Satish Jarkiholi and Boseraju are not involved in this**
>
> - DK Shivakumar, Deputy Chief Minister

"During the BJP tenure, contracts worth more than Rs 1 lakh crore were awarded by my department alone. MLAs are requesting payments of these contract bills," he said.

He stated that during the BJP government, they had warned the contractors a year in advance before the assembly elections.

"We warned them not to take up any work without funds. However, without listening to us, they are now issuing letters of request for payment of bills through political leaders," he added.

On Thursday, KSCA president R Manjunath said "brokers" were active in Shivakumar's office and he also alleged interference by one relative of Public Works Minister Satish Jarkiholi in the affairs concerning his department.

He further claimed that Minor Irrigation Minister NS Boseraju's son (Ravi Boseraju) "makes all the deals".

While Shivakumar asked the contractors to lodge a complaint in writing, Boseraju and Jarkiholi have denied the allegations. *—PTI*

Scams & kickbacks order of the day: BJP

BJP says bills cleared for only big contracts

NEW DELHI, 11 APRIL

The BJP on Friday said the Congress government in Karnataka may not last long with corruption and appeasement politics becoming the "order of the day" in the state.

This came after the Karnataka State Contractors Association (KSCA) on Thursday claimed that "unseen hands and brokers" were active in the offices of Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar and two other senior Cabinet Ministers, alleging that the menace of commission in the state was now more than the previous BJP government.

Responding to the allegations, the deputy chief minister on Friday suggested that if anyone has demanded commission from the contractors to pay their bills, then they should file a complaint with the Lokayukta.

"In Karnataka, corruption is at its peak in an organised manner. You have institutionalised corruption. Only big contracts are getting their bills cleared. The medium and the small ones are struggling," BJP national spokesperson Pratyush Kanth told a press conference at party headquarters here, reacting to the development.

BJP starts four-day rath yatra 'Bhima Hejje 100' to commemorate the centenary of BR Ambedkar, in front of Vidhana Soudha on Friday PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD

Kanth said the Congress had promised "so many things" during the state assembly polls but "scams, kickbacks and favoritism have become order of the day" under the party's rule in the state.

"The common people are bleeding there...This corrupt government is not going to last long. This project of Rahul Gandhi to ensure corruption all over KA is not going to have the light of the day," he added.

"Even the revenue minister of Karnataka had (earlier) gone on record to say that there is a lot of corruption in his department...This is very disturbing because Karnataka has to be the 'khata khat model' of Rahul Gandhi," he said, taking a swipe at the Congress leader.

Rayareddy, who was reported to have recently said at an event that Karnataka is number one in corruption, later clarified that his remarks were misquoted and taken out of context. *—PTI*

BURQA-CLAD WOMAN HARASSED

4 held for moral policing in City

BENGALURU, 11 APRIL

In a disturbing case of moral policing, a group of Muslim youths harassed and intimidated a young Muslim girl and her non-Muslim male friend after spotting them together on a scooter near a public park in Chandra Layout.

The youths, including a minor, not only hurled verbal abuses at the duo but also filmed the incident, questioning the girl's character and the boy's religion.

The incident that took place on 8 April came to light after the video was circulated on social media, showing the girl in a burqa being berated for her choice of company. One of the youths also recorded the confrontation, in the hope of receiving viral validation.

"Don't you feel ashamed sitting with a man from another faith?" one of the youths is heard saying, while another questions her parents about being aware of her whereabouts.

The miscreants recorded themselves harassing a burqa-clad woman in Bengaluru, here is a videograb PHOTO: SCREENGRAB

The boy was similarly targeted for associating with someone outside his religion and threatened with a cricket bat, as seen in the video.

The girl lodged a complaint with Chandra Layout police, following which the youths, Mohammed Mohsin, Mohammed Mansoor, Mohammed Afridi and Waseem Khan were arrested.

Deputy Commissioner of Police, Bengaluru West, S Girish clarified that no physical assault had taken place. One of the accused was known to the girl as they lived in the same area. *—Salar News*

This is not Bihar, UP or MP: Priyank

Condemning the incident, Minister Priyank M Kharge said, "This is not Bihar or Uttar Pradesh or Madhya Pradesh. Karnataka is a progressive state," underlining the Congress government's position against vigilante-style intrusion in personal affairs. Kharge's remarks were aimed at drawing a political contrast with BJP-ruled states that have faced criticism for vigilantism.

Man murders elderly mother over alcohol money

BENGALURU, 11 APRIL

The police on Friday arrested a man for allegedly bludgeoning his elderly mother to death with an iron rod after she refused to give him money to buy alcohol.

The incident took place on Thursday night in Bagalgunte.

The victim, Shantabai, 82, was reportedly killed by her son, Mahendra Singh around 9.30pm at their residence in Muneshwara Nagar. Bagalagunte police took the accused into custody.

Hailing from Channapatna, Singh, 56, was living with his mother for the past five years. His addiction to alcohol had reportedly strained family relations, leading to his wife leaving him. Unemployed and increasingly dependent on his mother, he regularly demanded money from her.

Shantabai, a widow of a government employee, managed her household through a monthly pension and rent from a property she owned.

According to police, an argument ensued between Shantabai and Singh after she refused to give him money. Enraged, he picked up an iron rod and hit her fatally on the head. Following inspection, her body was sent to the Victoria Hospital for autopsy. A case of murder has been registered under relevant sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita. *—Salar News*

Mahendra Singh and his mother Shantabai PHOTO: SALAR

- Unemployed and increasingly dependent on his mother, Mahendra Singh regularly demanded money from her

Cyber crooks make fake FB account of Top Cop, attempt extortion

BENGALURU, 11 APRIL

Unidentified cyber fraudsters have created a fake Facebook (FB) profile using the name and photo of City Police Commissioner B Dayananda in an apparent attempt to dupe the public and extort money.

The crooks used the senior IPS officer's photo to set up a fake account and began sending friend requests to people. Once accepted, the fraudsters reportedly messaged select recipients, asking for money.

The scam, though unsuccessful, has raised eyebrows within law enforcement circles. "It's one thing to impersonate celebrities or common citizens for fraud. But to misuse the name of the City's top cop? That's both gutsy and foolish," a senior police officer said.

The fake account of City Police Commissioner PHOTO: SALAR

Following many online complaints, the cybercrime officials spotted the fake account and quickly deactivated it.

Dayananda has routinely warned citizens to stay vigilant against cyber scams, yet this incident highlights how even law enforcement figures are not immune to online fraud. The audacity of using a police chief's identity reflects the worsening trend of digital deception.

"I request netizens to keep their FB account locked and to be careful while accepting friend requests," Dayananda said.

Karnataka tops southern states in cybercrime, with over 52,000 cases in last four years. *—Salar News*

Yelahanka police bust IPL betting racket, 8 arrested

BENGALUGU, 11 APRIL

Yelahanka police on Thursday arrested eight people for an illegal betting racket during the Indian Premier League (IPL) match between Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) and Delhi Capitals (DC).

Police seized laptops and other equipment.

The key accused is Vijay Kumar, who allegedly has BJP links. Five of the arrested were released on bail, but Kumar and two others are in police custody. Police say Kumar had been contacting BJP leaders to avoid further legal trouble. — Salar News

PROTEST AGAINST WAQF ACT

Muslims held an informal protest against Waqf Act on Millers Road in Bengaluru on Friday, but cops soon dispersed them as there was no permission to protest PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD

RS 1.32 CRORE TRANSFERRED

Gang dupes bank with fake court orders

BENGALURU, 11 APRIL

The police arrested three fraudsters for creating fake court orders using forged government email IDs and duping a private bank into transferring over Rs 1.32 crore in the City.

The cyber crime department arrested the accused following an investigation.

The accused have been identified as Abhimanyu and Neeraj from Delhi and Sagar from Rajasthan, the alleged mastermind behind the operation.

The trio created a fake email ID impersonating a government department and sent 18 forged court orders to an ICICI Bank branch in Halasuru between September 2024 and February 2025.

The orders directed the bank to release funds frozen in certain accounts. One of the accused, posing as a government official, also called a bank employee. Believing the documents to be genuine, the employee transferred Rs 1,32,28,293 crore from two ICICI accounts to an Axis Bank account.

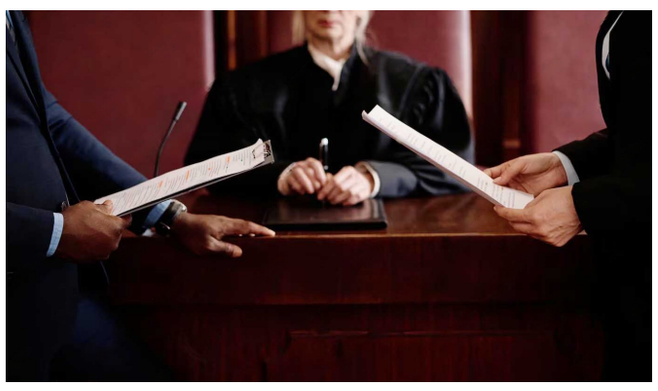


PHOTO: FREEPIK

Bank managers, sensing foul play, filed a complaint with the cyber crime department. During the probe, investigators traced the transferred money to an individual in Delhi's Vikas Nagar, who led them to his associate in Rajasthan.

- The trio created a fake email ID impersonating a government department and sent 18 forged court orders to an ICICI Bank branch in Halasuru

Sagar had not only created the fake government email ID, but also fabricated the court documents. He had received Rs 38 lakh from the scam and spent the bulk of it. Authorities have now frozen Rs 63 lakh in his Axis Bank account.

The accused were brought to Bengaluru and produced before the court, which remanded them to eight days in police custody. *—Salar News*

Elephant handlers poach boar

MYSURU, 11 APRIL

Nagarahole forest authorities have suspended two elephant handlers of Cauvery elephant camp for helping a private person to poach wildlife in the second week of March.

Hunsur Wildlife sub Division range forest officer Subramanya has lodged a complaint against the three, urging the senior forest department officials to take stern action against them.

The incident came to light when the forest department officials spotted the gun, bullets and other equipment used to poach deer, other wildlife secretly by a trio accused at a quarters built of elephant handlers at Doddaharave elephant camp on 18 March. This gun belongs to the main accused Manju of Neralakuppe village.

During the internal investigation conducted by the forest department officials headed Hunsur wildlife sub division assistant conservator of forests Lakshmikanth, the mahuts H N Manju and DB Manju confessed about helping the main accused Manju of Neralakuppe village of Periyapatna taluk to poach sambars, deers and other wildlife for its meat, selling along with him.

Speaking to reporters, Deputy Conservator of Forest, Nagarahole Tiger Reserve PA Seema said that her department has initiated to take serious action against the guilty mahuts besides also launched a manhunt to nab Manju of DB Kuppe village of Periyapatna taluk who is on the run after a complaint lodged against him along with other two accused, she said. *—Salar News*

PHOTO: ANI

Nadda launches Ayushman Bharat scheme in Odisha

CUTTACK, 11 APRIL

Union Health Minister JP Nadda on Friday launched Ayushman Bharat scheme in Odisha, nearly 10 months after BJP formed state government. He hailed the roll-out as a "historic day" and expressed hope that West Bengal, the only state yet to adopt the scheme, would soon follow. Nadda criticised the TMC-led Bengal government for rejecting Centre's appeals, asserting that states blocking Modi government schemes had faced electoral backlash, citing Odisha and Delhi. In Odisha, 3.51 crore people across 1.03 lakh families are set to benefit from scheme, he said. State also plans to expand medical education infrastructure and fill healthcare vacancies. *—PTI*

Haryana issues notice to 12 CHCs amid low sex ratio

CHANDIGARH, 11 APRIL

In a decisive move against female foeticide, the Haryana health department has issued show-cause notices to senior medical officers in charge of 12 community health centres with low sex ratios. This initiative is part of broader efforts to enforce the Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (PCPNDT) Act more stringently. Virender Yadav, Director of the National Health Mission in Haryana and convenor of the State Task Force (STF), announced that 23 Medical Termination of Pregnancy (MTP) centres have received notices this week, alongside FIRs filed against 17 online sellers of MTP kits in the past two months Additionally, the PNDT nodal officer in Hisar district has been suspended, and immediate changes were made to the nodal officers of five districts with the lowest sex ratios. *—PTI*

YSRCP leader held after attacking TDP member

GUNTUR, 11 APRIL

YSRCP leader K Gorantla Madhav has been taken into custody after allegedly attempting to attack C Kiran Kumar, who was earlier arrested for making inappropriate remarks about YS Bharathi Reddy, police confirmed on Friday. The incident occurred while Kumar was being escorted by police following his arrest. Madhav allegedly tried to confront him in response to his comments against the party leader. "We will register a case against Madhav, and he will be remanded on Friday," said Guntur Superintendent of Police, S Satish. Kiran Kumar has been booked under Section 111(1) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) for allegedly inciting enmity between groups. Officials described him as a repeat offender and stated that he would be presented before a magistrate for further legal action. *—PTI*

Street hawkers seek heatwave policy from govt

NEW DELHI, 11 APRIL

The National Hawkers Federation (NHF) has called on the Indian government to establish national-level guidelines to safeguard street vendors amid the increasing threat of heatwaves. With temperatures soaring and over two crore vendors at risk, the NHF highlighted that 2023 has seen approximately 30 days of extreme heat. In a letter addressed to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav, the federation demanded the inclusion of heatwaves in the Disaster Management Act. Vendors are suffering from the dual impact of health risks stemming from prolonged exposure to heat and diminished income due to decreased customer traffic. *—PTI*

BJP won't interfere in AIADMK affairs: Shah

Shah says Annamalai is still BJP state chief; Nagendran only person to file nomination for post

CHENNAI, 11 APRIL

Nearly two years after parting ways, the AIADMK and BJP on Friday rekindled their alliance, with Union Minister Amit Shah declaring that the 2026 Tamil Nadu Assembly election will be fought under the leadership of AIADMK chief Edappadi K Palaniswami.

Asked whether AIADMK joined the NDA only because of the 'removal' of Annamalai, Shah said "there is no truth in this. Annamalai is state chief even today," he said, as he was flanked by Palaniswami and Annamalai on either side. AIADMK snapped ties with BJP in September 2023 reportedly over Annamalai's remarks about late party stalwarts, including Jayalalithaa.

His assertion comes after Nainar Nagendran was the only person to file a nomination for BJP president post, shortly after Annamalai announced he would not contest for the position.

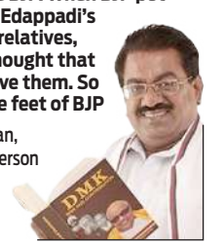
Union Home Minister and BJP leader Amit Shah with AIADMK general secretary Edappadi K Palaniswami in Chennai *PHOTO: PTI*

Annamalai, a 2011-batch IPS officer, joined the BJP in 2020. During his eight-year career as an IPS officer, he earned the moniker "Singham Anna" due to his policing style. "Singham"" which means lion, seeks to draw a parallel between him and the supercop portrayed by Ajay Devgn in the eponymous 2011 film.

Asked if expelled AIADMK leaders O Panneerselvam and TTV Dhinakaran would also be part of the NDA, he said, "there won't be any of our interference in AIADMK's internal affairs." He was confident that NDA would see victory in the 2026 polls. *—PTI*

> **AIADMK has no conditions and demands. We will have no interference in the internal matters of the AIADMK. This alliance is going to be beneficial to both NDA and AIADMK**
>
> -Amit Shah, Union Home Minister

> **This was most expected. They were afraid of the BJP. When BJP put pressure on Edappadi's son and his relatives, Edappadi thought that he has to save them. So he fell at the feet of BJP**
>
> -TKS Elangovan, DMK Spokesperson

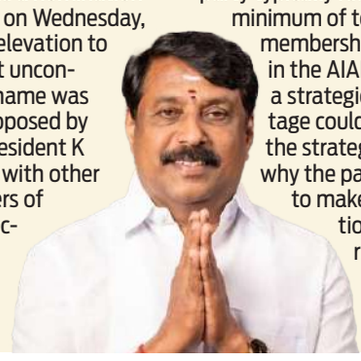


WHO IS NAGENDRAN, THE MAN SET TO BECOME TN BJP PRESIDENT?

Chennai, 11 April

Nainar Nagendran is set to become the new Tamil Nadu BJP President. The 64-year old Nagendran was the only person to file a nomination for the post on Wednesday, making his elevation to the top post uncontested. His name was formally proposed by outgoing president K Annamalai, with other senior leaders of the party seconding the nomination.

Nagendran, a BJP MLA from Tirunelveli, has a political past in the AIADMK. Nagendran has been in the BJP for 8 years. Although the party typically requires a minimum of ten years of membership, his past in the AIADMK being a strategic advantage could be one of the strategic reasons why the party decided to make an exception to the rule. *-PTI with Agencies*



TERROR THREATS

NIA interrogates Rana to unravel larger conspiracies

NEW DELHI, 11 APRIL

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Friday began questioning Mumbai attacks mastermind Tahawwur Hussain Rana to unravel the larger conspiracy behind the 2008 terror strikes, official sources said.

Rana was brought to the NIA headquarters early Friday morning after a Delhi court granted 18-day custody to the probe agency, following his extradition from the US. Rana is being kept in a highly-secured cell, inside the anti-terror agency's head office at CGO complex here, being guarded by security personnel round the clock, the sources said.

The investigation is being led by NIA's Deputy Inspector General (DIG) Jaya Roy, who is also the Chief Investigating Officer, they said.

It is learnt that the interrogation is focussed on getting more details on his possible connection with Pakistan-based terror group Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), which had

orchestrated the attacks.

The 64-year-old Pakistani-origin Canadian businessman would also be questioned on his suspected links with the officials of Pakistan spy agency Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) and his exact role behind the attack, the sources said.

Incidentally, Rana's custodial interrogation comes at a time when senior Maharashtra-cadre Indian Police Service (IPS) officer Sadanand Vasant Date heads NIA. Date, who was then posted as an Additional Commissioner of Police in Mumbai received serious injuries in the terror attack. Date valiantly fought Ajmal Kasab and Abu Ismail. *—PTI*

Oppn works for parivar ka vikas: PM

VARANASI, 11 APRIL

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday said those hankering for power focus solely on promoting their own families, while his government works for inclusive development.

Addressing a gathering after laying the foundation stone of 44 projects worth Rs 3,880 crore here, Modi said his government's guiding mantra in serving the nation has always been 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas'.

The power hungry are driven by family-centric development, he said.

The PM also paid tributes to Dalit reformer Mahatma Jyotiba Phule on his birth along with his wife Savitribai Phule.

Modi described Varanasi as becoming the region's health capital with several hospitals opening centres here.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath in Varanasi *PHOTO: PTI*

Completion of ongoing projects would boost business activities in the region, while initiatives like the Kashi Tamil Sangamam would strengthen national unity, he said.

"Today Uttar Pradesh is number one in GI tagging in the entire country. Our culture, products and skills are globally recognized," he said.

Speaking about the government's efforts to ensure that India hosts the 2036 Olympic Games, he urged young players to train harder and win medals in the games.

The projects inaugurated by Modi included 130 drinking-water projects, 100 anganwadi centres, 356 libraries, a polytechnic college in Pindra, a government degree college, a transit hostel for police in Ramnagar and four rural roads. *—PTI*

Modi: Take strict action in gangrape case

Three more accused have been arrested in connection with the alleged gang rape of a 19-year-old woman in Varanasi, a police official said on Friday. With these arrests, the police have captured 12 out of 23 accused in the case. Prime Minister Narendra Modi asked officials to take the strictest possible action against those involved. The

case involves the alleged gang-rape of a 19-year-old woman by 23 individuals over six days. The accused drugged the victim and moved her between several hotels. *-PTI*

Rescued from Israel, Bharuccha thanks PM

Actor Nushrratt Bharuccha met Prime Minister Narendra Modi and thanked him for helping her when she was stranded in Israel. She was stuck in Tel Aviv in 2023, when the war broke out between the Israel and Hamas. She was later rescued by Indian officials.

"It was an incredible privilege to thank you in person, Modi, for your unwavering leadership and the swift action taken by the government to bring back Indian citizens," she wrote on Instagram. *-Agencies*

RaGa says employment benefit scheme is 'jumla'

NEW DELHI, 11 APRIL

Rahul Gandhi has launched a scathing attack on the government, accusing it of failing to define the Employment Linked Incentive (ELI) scheme announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi nearly a year ago. In a statement on X, he questioned if the scheme was merely "another jumla", a term often used to denote empty promises.

Gandhi expressed frustration over the lack of concrete plans for job creation, asking, "What is your concrete plan to generate the crores of jobs India desperately needs, or is this just another jumla?" He emphasised that job creation cannot occur by merely supporting large corporates or enriching billionaires. Instead, he believes in investing in MSMEs and supporting local production.

Rahul Gandhi *PHOTO: ANI*

He highlighted the government's inaction, stating, "It's been nearly a year since the ELI was announced, and the government hasn't even defined it." He challenged PM Modi directly, asking, "Where has this Rs 10,000 crore scheme disappeared? Have you abandoned our unemployed youth along with your promises?"

Gandhi's remarks come amidst a heated exchange with BJP representatives, who have countered his claims by defending the Modi government's record on job creation and pointing out historical employment figures.

In response, BJP's Amit Malviya accused Gandhi of "weaponising ignorance" and claimed that his statements were a calculated distortion of reality. *—PTI*

M'rashtra cyber issue advisories

MUMBAI, 11 APRIL

Maharashtra Cyber has issued advisories to various state government departments, including police, to take precautionary steps to avoid cyberattacks as the credentials of many of these departments were found on the darknet, officials said on Friday. Maharashtra Cyber also wrote to Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) recommending blocking of Wikipedia platform under relevant sections of Information Technology Act for failing to comply with specific police directives.

"With these advisories, we have asked the departments to strengthen their websites from being hacked. We are trying to plug gaps so as to prevent cyberattacks," said Yashasvi Yadav, Additional Director General of Police of Maharashtra Cyber.

> • Maharashtra Cyber, while monitoring the internet landscape, had found objectionable content against Maratha emperor Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj on Wikipedia

He said Maharashtra Cyber, while monitoring the internet landscape, had found objectionable content against Maratha emperor Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj on Wikipedia, after which several notices were issued to Wikipedia and its parent organization Wikimedia Foundation for removal of such content as well as disclosure of user information responsible for editing these passages.

Another official said a similar notice has been sent to Proton Mail services as it was allegedly misused for serious criminal activities.

"In one case, Proton Mail was used to send hoax bomb threats targeting Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport in Mumbai. Multiple FIRs were registered and legal notices were sent to Proton Mail requesting crucial user information necessary for investigation. But no response was received," this official said.

"But the platform failed to respond or assist in the investigations" *—PTI*

AMID TRADE WAR

'India never negotiates at gunpoint'

NEW DELHI, 11 APRIL

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar flagged concerns over growing unpredictability in global political and economic order, especially the weaponisation of economic activities and over-concentration of manufacturing. New Delhi is geared up for a "very high" degree of urgency in concluding trade deals with the US and the European Union, he added.

Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal said "We never negotiate at gunpoint. Favourable time constraints motivate us for quicker talks, but till the tme we are not able to secure the interest of our country and our people, we do not hurry (into any deal)"

In a session at the Global Technology Summit, Jaishankar said the US under President Donald Trump has fundamentally changed its approach to engaging with the world and it has consequences across every key domain, especially in the technology sector.

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar speaks at the Carnegie India's Global Technology Summit, in New Delhi, Friday, *PHOTO: PTI*

"We did four years of talking with the first Trump administration. But the deal did not get through," he said. "This time around, we are certainly geared up for a very high degree of urgency. I mean, we see a window here. Our trade teams are really charged up."

"We are trying to get the other side to speed it up. This was normally a complaint made about us in the past; that we were the guys slowing it down," he said. "It's actually the other way around today. We are trying to communicate that urgency to all three accounts (the US, EU, the UK)."

Meanwhile, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said that India is in continuous dialogue with the US on the proposed BTA.

"I have said it many times before that we do not negotiate at the gunpoint. Timely restrictions are good as they encourage us to talk swiftly, but until we are able to protect the interests of the country and people, it is never good to be hasty)," Goyal said. *—PTI*

CBI probe against Kerala former chief secretary

KOCHI, 11 APRIL

The Kerala High Court has ordered the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) to initiate a probe against former Chief Principal Secretary KM Abraham, who served under Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan. The decision follows a complaint alleging that Abraham, a retired IAS officer and former Additional Chief Secretary (Finance), amassed wealth disproportionate to his known sources of income.

Justice K Babu, in a detailed 74-page order, stated that a preliminary enquiry indicated Abraham possessed significant movable and immovable properties exceeding his income legitimacy.

The court expressed concern over the credibility of the Vigilance and Anti-Corruption Bureau's (VACB) investigation, noting that it appeared to protect Abraham by excluding substantial property acquisitions from its assessment.

KM Abraham *PHOTO: X*

The High Court rejected a prior ruling from 2017 by the Enquiry Commissioner-cum-Special Judge in Thiruvananthapuram, calling it "perverse" for dismissing the case without proper consideration.

The petitioner accused Abraham of acquiring high-value properties, claims that Abraham has denied. The court emphasised the need for a thorough investigation by the CBI to uphold public trust in the process. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

91-year-old Kerala man who stabbed wife gets bail

KOCHI, 11 APRIL

The Kerala High Court on Friday granted bail to a 91-year-old man accused of stabbing his 88-year-old wife after she accused him of infidelity. The petitioner, Thevan, had been living with his wife, Kunjali, when tensions arose over her suspicions about his faithfulness. According to the prosecution, she accused him of having affairs with other women, which allegedly made the elderly man feel insulted and frustrated. The confrontation on 21 March, 2025, came to a head when Thevan allegedly attacked Kunjali with a knife, leaving her seriously injured. Granting bail to the 91-year-old, the court said Thevan should know that in his old age, his only strength will be Kunjali, and Kunjali also should think the same way about Thevan. *—PTI*

High Court jails UP lawyer for wearing unbuttoned shirt

LUCKNOW, 11 APRIL

The Allahabad High Court has sentenced lawyer Ashok Pande to six-months of imprisonment in a 2021 contempt case for appearing in court without robe and with his shirt unbuttoned. The bench of Justices Vivek Chaudhary and BR Singh said on Thursday that "exemplary punishment is warranted" given the seriousness of the charges, Pande's past conduct and his refusal to participate in the proceedings. The bench also imposed a fine of Rs 2,000, with an additional one-month jail term in case of non-payment. Pande has been given four weeks to surrender before the Chief Judicial Magistrate, Lucknow. The bench also asked Pande to explain why he should not be barred from practicing in the Allahabad HC and its Lucknow bench. *—PTI*

2 students drown in Odisha, one found hanging

BHUBANESWAR, 11 APRIL

Odisha reported three unnatural deaths of college students, with two drowning in reservoirs and one found hanging in his hostel room, police said on Friday. Saswati Bhoi, 22, a final year BTech student at VSSUT, Burla, drowned in Hirakud reservoir while taking a bath along with her friends on Thursday evening, a police officer said. Sritam Pradhan, 20, an MBBS student in Bhubaneswar who hailed from Tainsa village of Angul district, also drowned in Derejang reservoir in Angul district on Wednesday. His body was fished out on Thursday, police said. Meanwhile, the body of 22-year-old BTech student Sandeep Lenka was found hanging in the hostel room of his college at Gunupur in Rayagad district on Thursday, police said. *—PTI*

Cartel exploiting students busted; ₹1 cr heroin seized

NEW DELHI, 11 APRIL

Delhi Police have dismantled an international drug cartel that allegedly exploited students by recruiting African nationals under the guise of education and using them to distribute heroin valued at over Rs 1 crore. Among the five, two foreign nationals, Humphrey Muwong, 33, from Uganda and Chukwu Ebuka Umeh, 36, from Nigeria, were apprehended with 700 grams of high-grade heroin. According to police officials, the duo was connected to a larger operation overseen by Dagri Jean Marc, a Nigerian national residing in Africa. Marc reportedly facilitated the entry of African nationals into India on student visas, which were then misused to carry out narcotics trafficking from Tilak Nagar. *—PTI*

If you've fundamental rights, so do the people, SC tells ED

Court raps agency for invoking Article 32 to transfer a case

NEW DELHI, 11 APRIL

The Supreme Court said ED should think of the fundamental rights of the people and frowned upon the agency's plea seeking the transfer of the Nagrik Apurti Nigam (NAN) scam case from Chhattisgarh to New Delhi.

A bench of Justices Abhay S Oka and Ujjal Bhuyan questioned the agency on how it had filed a writ petition under Article 32 of the Constitution meant for individuals.

Article 32 of Constitution guarantees the "Right to Constitutional Remedies," empowering individuals to seek redressal from the Supreme Court for violations of their fundamental rights, allowing them to directly approach the court for enforcement of these rights.

At this, additional solicitor general SV Raju sought its permission to withdraw the plea and said, "ED also has fundamental rights."

"If ED has fundamental rights, it should think about the fundamental rights of people too," the bench remarked, while allowing Raju to withdraw the plea.

The probe agency recently claimed that some constitutional functionaries of Chhattisgarh were in touch with a high court judge to ensure judicial reliefs to some accused in the case regarding the alleged multi-crore NAN scam. Aside from seeking the transfer of the PMLA case out of Chhattisgarh, the ED sought cancellation of the anticipatory bail granted to some high-profile accused persons in the money laundering case.

The alleged scam in the public distribution system (PDS) surfaced when the state's anti-corruption bureau raided some offices of NAN, the nodal agency for ensuring effective operation of the PDS system, in February 2015 and seized unaccounted cash totalling Rs 3.64 crore.

Many of the rice and salt samples collected during the raid were tested for their quality and were claimed to be sub-standard and unfit for human consumption. *—PTI*

The ED claimed that some constitutional functionaries of Chhattisgarh were conniving a high court judge for favours in the NAN scam *PHOTO: PTI*

SC seeks status on Ganga encroachments

New Delhi, 11 April

Expressing concern, the Supreme Court directed the Centre and Bihar to file status reports on clearing encroachments on the banks of the Ganga.

The court also sought to know the number of encroachments as on date and the manner and time period in which the authorities proposed to remove them. "We would like to know what steps have been taken by the authorities to remove all such encroachments over the banks of river Ganga," it said. *—PTI*

Chief Minister Nitish Kumar has announced an ex-gratia of Rs 4 lakh for the next of kin of each deceased *PHOTO: ANI*

Bihar lightning, hailstorm death toll climbs to 61

PATNA/HAZARIBAG
11 APRIL

The death toll due to lightning strikes and hailstorms in Bihar climbed to 61 after 36 more fatalities were reported, officials said on Friday.

While 39 people died due to hailstorms and rain-related incidents, 22 people died due to lightning strikes on Thursday. Twenty-five deaths were reported on Thursday evening, and following collation of data from various districts, the toll mounted to 61, they said. Nalanda district reported the highest number of fatalities at 23.

"The death toll due to lightning strikes and hailstorms in Bihar climbed to 61 in several districts in Bihar," a statement issued by the state Disaster Management Department on Friday said.

Chief Minister Nitish Kumar on Thursday expressed condolences over the deaths and announced an ex gratia of Rs 4 lakh for the next of kin of each deceased. On Wednesday, 13 people died in lightning strikes in four districts of Bihar.

Four persons were killed in separate incidents of lightning strikes in Jharkhand's Hazaribag district, an official said on Friday. *—PTI*

HC: Adult parents can live together without marriage

PRAYAGRAJ, 11 APRIL

Observing that unmarried parents who have attained majority can live together, the Allahabad High Court has asked police to look into the security requirements of an interfaith couple facing threats.

Hearing a writ petition filed by their minor daughter, a bench comprising Justice Shekhar B Saraf and Justice Vipin Chandra Dixit said, "Father and mother of the child... have been living together since 2018".

"The child is presently one year and four months old. The parents of the child are apprehensive of certain threats from the former in-laws of the biological mother. In our view, under the Constitutional scheme, the parents, who are major, are entitled to live together, even if they have not undergone marriage," the court said.

After the death of her husband, the biological mother of the child started living with the biological father. She started receiving threats from her former in-laws,

The parents of the child submitted that police authorities were not willing to register FIR and have been "humiliating" them. The court directed the Sambhal police to book an FIR. *—PTI*

20 injured as SFI, lawyers clash in Kochi

KOCHI, 11 APRIL

A violent clash erupted between lawyers and students, allegedly from the Students' Federation of India (SFI), at the Ernakulam District Court, resulting in injuries to nearly 20 individuals. The confrontation occurred during the District Bar Association's annual celebrations.

According to police reports, sixteen SFI activists and eight lawyers sustained injuries during the altercation. Lawyers contended that SFI members invaded the celebration, causing chaos when students from Maharaja's College accessed the venue.

Conversely, SFI representatives claimed that inappropriate behaviour from intoxicated lawyers prompted the disruption, asserting they were attacked after they questioned the lawyers' conduct.

Police officers who intervened to defuse the situation also suffered injuries.

Video footage of the incident has circulated on social media, drawing public attention.

VD Satheesan, Leader of the Opposition, has called on the CPI(M) leadership to rein in the SFI, citing their involvement in repeated anti-social behaviour. He accused the activists of disrupting the celebrations, misbehaving with women, and urged the party to withdraw its support for what he labelled a descent into criminality.

As of now, neither the CPI(M) nor the SFI has made any public comments regarding the incident. *—PTI*

PHOTO: X

- Leader of Opposition VD Satheesan has called on the CPI(M) leadership to rein in the SFI, citing their involvement in repeated anti-social behaviour

Missing Hungarian tourist's body found in Meghalaya forest

SHILLONG, 11 APRIL

The decomposed body of Zolt Puskas, a Hungarian tourist who had been missing for nearly two weeks, has been discovered in a forest in Meghalaya's East Khasi Hills district, police confirmed on Friday.

Puskas, who was en route to the famous double-decker root bridge at Nongriat, approximately 20 km south of Sohra town, was last seen checking into a hotel in Shillong on 29 March. He checked out the same day and took a local taxi to Sohra, reportedly being dropped at Mawsahew village. Witnesses indicated he set off alone with only a backpack towards Nongriat, without a tourist guide.

His disappearance prompted the Hungarian Embassy to lodge a missing persons report on 29 March, leading to an FIR filed on 2 April. This initiated a search and rescue operation in collaboration with local villagers and social organisations.

On Thursday, authorities located his body in a remote area near Ramdait village along the trail. Preliminary investigations suggest he may have slipped and fallen, leading to his tragic demise. Police have initiated a comprehensive inquiry into the circumstances surrounding his death. *—PTI*

Zolt Puskas *PHOTO: ANI*

Sacked Bengal teachers demand ineligibility proof

KOLKATA, 11 APRIL

Thousands of teachers, who lost their jobs following a Supreme Court verdict that invalidated their appointments, took out a march from Karunamoyee in Salt Lake to the West Bengal School Service Commission (SSC) Bhawan on Friday.

The protesters seeking reinstatement demanded the release of their Optical Mark Recognition (OMR) sheets to identify the genuine candidates. They were joined by members of several civil society organisations in a show of solidarity.

Carrying placards demanding reinstatement, the protesters were joined by members of various civil society organisations in a show of solidarity.

The teachers also said the police officer accused of kicking the protestors in Kasba has now been assigned to investigate the cases registered against them. *—PTI*

MAN ARRESTED FOR PLACING MEAT INSIDE IN AGRA'S JAMA MASJID

LUCKNOW, 11 APRIL

A person was arrested on Friday for allegedly placing meat in Agra's Jama Masjid.

The accused, identified as Nazruddin, hails from Teela Nandram in the city. The police are interrogating him find the motive behind the act. The meat was sent for testing to a laboratory.

CCTV footage showed the accused placing the packet of meat inside the mosque on the night of 10 April.

The police located the shop that had sold the meat by tracking the bike used to ferry the packet. The owner of that shop was interrogated, which led the police to Nazruddin.

A case has been registered against Nazruddin, who is still in custody. *—PTI*

Kerala HC quashes POCSO, forgery case against Asianet scribes

KOCHI, 11 APRIL

The Kerala High Court has quashed charges against six journalists from Malayalam news channel Asianet, who were accused under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act for allegedly revealing the identity of a minor sexual assault victim during a programme on drug abuse. The prosecution claimed that the journalists conspired to damage the state government's reputation by airing a programme named "Narcotics is a dirty business", which allegedly used the victim's voice without consent and involved impersonation using the daughter of one of the journalists.

Justice A Badharudeen dismissed these allegations, noting that the broadcast aimed to protect the victim's identity by altering her appearance.

The judge found no intent to disclose her identity, asserting that using the victim's voice did not constitute forgery, as there was no intent to harm.

Justice Badharudeen lauded the programme for its role in raising public awareness about escalating drug abuse among youth in Kerala, describing it as a "beneficial video".

The judge said the programme emphasised the need for responsible journalism, condemning media outlets that publish unverified allegations without adequate investigation.

Justice Badharudeen also called for greater vigilance among media professionals, urging them to uphold moral principles and ensure that all sides are represented in news reporting to facilitate informed public evaluation. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

LIFE-SAVING FEAT

IISc develops venom maps of Russell's Viper

NEW DELHI, 11 APRIL

Researchers have developed "venom maps" using local climate conditions that could help predict the venom characteristics of Russell's viper, a deadly snake widely found in India.

A team of researchers from the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru, said the venom maps could help clinicians select the most appropriate treatment for patients with snake bites. The findings were published in the journal "PLOS Neglected Tropical Diseases".

Author Kartik Sunagar from the Centre for Ecological Sciences, IISc said, "Russell's viper is arguably the clinically most important snake species in the world. It kills and maims more people than any other snake species."

"Our recent studies have shed light on the influence of biotic factors, such as developmental shifts in diet, on Russell's viper venom composition and toxicity," Sunagar said, adding, "Here, we highlight, for the first time, the role of climatic conditions, such as temperature, humidity and rainfall, in driving the biochemical functions of Russell's viper venoms."

For the study, the researchers analysed venom samples from 115 snakes collected from 34 locations across India. The activity of venom toxins, including enzymes that break down proteins, phospholipids and amino acids, was tested. Climate data gathered over the time was then used to understand the link between the venom composition and the local climate where the snakes were caught.

Temperature and rainfall were found to partly explain the region-to-region variation in snake-venom composition.

"Our findings reveal a collective influence of various temperature and precipitation parameters that partly explain the variability in enzymatic activities of D. russelii venom," the authors wrote.

The breakdown of proteins, or "protease activity", was found to be higher among snakes in drier regions of India, they said.

Using this data, the team created a map of expected venom types of Russell's vipers across its range in India. It could help predict the clinical symptoms of snake bites in different regions and thus, develop targeted therapies, such as toxin-specific antibodies, the researchers said. *—PTI*

PHOTO: FREEPIK

Past mishaps not reason to ban religious events: HC

NEW DELHI, 11 APRIL

The Delhi High Court has ruled that previous untoward incidents should not automatically prevent the holding of religious events, directing the Delhi Police to reconsider permission for a Hanuman Jayanti procession in Jahangirpuri.

Justice Sachin Datta addressed the issue following a plea from organisers after the police denied permission for the procession scheduled to be held on 12 April, citing concerns over maintaining law and order.

"The occurrence of an untoward incident in the year 2022 cannot necessarily preclude holding of processions on religious occasions, as per the prevalent practice in the previous years," he said.

This referred to violent clashes between two groups during a Hanuman Jayanti procession in Jahangirpuri on 16 April, 2022, which resulted in injuries to eight police personnel and a civilian.

While the police expressed apprehension about the "volatile and uncertain situation" in the area after the past incident, the court encouraged consideration for a "limited procession" on a new route.

It instructed the police to ensure adequate security and to communicate their decision to the petitioner ahead of the event. The organiser mentioned having conducted the procession since 2010 but faced refusals since 2019, suggesting a new route might alleviate police concerns. *—PTI*

- Justice Sachin Datta made the observation on a plea against police denying permission for Hanuman Jayanti procession scheduled to he held on 12 April

RALLY AGAINST WAQF BILL

Students of Aliah University in Kolkata took out a rally protesting the Waqf (Amendment) Act and demanding that the legislation be withdrawn.

The participants in the rally also blocked the seven-point crossing in the Park Circus area here for some time after they went past the barricades put up by the police. Protests were also held at Hyderabad's Charminar and Jammu & Kashmir's Srinagar. People were seen holding placards as a demonstration against the Waqf Bill in Charminar but the protest held in Srinagar was blocked by the police

PHOTO: PTI

China's largest dam and its effect on India & B'desh

The proposed dam highlights some geopolitical issues raised by rivers that cross international borders ***PHOTO: PTI***

China recently approved the construction of the world's largest hydropower dam, across the Yarlung Tsangpo river in Tibet. When fully up and running, it will be the world's largest power plant – by some distance.

Yet many are worried the dam will displace local people and cause huge environmental disruption. This is particularly the case in the downstream nations of India and Bangladesh, where that same river is known as the Brahmaputra.

The proposed dam highlights some of the geopolitical issues raised by rivers that cross international borders. Who owns the river itself, and who has the right to use its water? Do countries have obligations not to pollute shared rivers, or to keep their shipping lanes open? And when a drop of rain falls on a mountain, do farmers in a different country thousands of miles downstream have a claim to use it? Ultimately, we still don't know enough about these questions of river rights and ownership to settle disputes easily.

The Yarlung Tsangpo begins on the Tibetan Plateau, in a region sometimes referred to as the world's third pole as its glaciers contain the largest stores of ice outside of the Arctic and Antarctica. A series of huge rivers tumble down from the plateau and spread across south and southeast Asia. Well over a billion people depend on them, from Pakistan to Vietnam.

Yet the region is already under immense stress as global warming melts glaciers and changes rainfall patterns. Reduced water flow in the dry season, coupled with sudden releases of water during monsoons, could intensify both water scarcity and flooding, endangering millions in India and Bangladesh.

The construction of large dams in the Himalayas has historically disrupted river flows, displaced people, destroyed fragile ecosystems and increased risks of floods. The Yarlung Tsangpo Grand Dam will likely be no exception.

The dam will sit along the tectonic boundary where the Indian and Eurasian plates converge to form the Himalayas. This makes the region particularly vulnerable to earthquakes, landslides, and sudden floods when natural dams burst.

Downstream, the Brahmaputra is one of south Asia's mightiest rivers and has been integral to human civilisation for thousands of years. It's one of the world's most sediment-rich rivers, which helps form a huge and fertile delta.

Yet a dam of this scale would trap massive amounts of sediment upstream, disrupting its flow downstream. This could make farming less productive, threatening food security in one of the world's most densely populated regions.

The Sundarbans mangrove forest, a Unesco World Heritage Site that stretches across most of coastal Bangladesh and a portion of India, is particularly vulnerable. Any disruption to the balance of sediment could accelerate coastal erosion and make the already low lying area more vulnerable to sea-level rise.

Unfortunately, despite the transboundary nature of the Brahmaputra, there is no comprehensive treaty governing it. This lack of formal agreements complicates efforts to ensure China, India and Bangladesh share the water equitably and work together to prepare for disasters.

These sorts of agreements are perfectly possible: 14 countries plus the European Union are parties to a convention on protecting the Danube, for instance. But the Brahmaputra is not alone. Many transboundary rivers in the global south face similar neglect and inadequate research.

In our recent study, colleagues and I analysed 4,713 case studies across 286 transboundary river basins. We wanted to assess how much academic research there was on each, what themes it focused on, and how that varied depending on the type of river.

We found that, while large rivers in the global north receive considerable academic attention, many equally important rivers in the global south remain overlooked.

We found that research in the global north tends to focus on technical aspects of river management and governance, whereas studies in the global south primarily examine conflicts and resource competition.

In Asia, research is concentrated on large, geopolitically significant basins like the Mekong and Indus. Smaller rivers where water crises are most acute are often neglected. Small and medium-sized river basins, critical to millions of people in the global south, are among the most neglected in research. —*The Conversation*

SALAR ساہر

US cancels Social Security of over 6,000 immigrants

The Trump administration has moved to classify more than 6,000 living immigrants as dead, cancelling their Social Security numbers and effectively wiping out their ability to work or receive benefits in an effort to get them to leave the country, according to two people familiar with the situation.

The move will make it much harder for those affected to use banks or other basic services where Social Security numbers are required. It's part of a broader effort by President Donald Trump to crack down on immigrants who were allowed to enter and remain temporarily in the United States under programmes instituted by his predecessor, Joe Biden.

The Trump administration is moving the immigrants' names and legally obtained Social Security numbers to a database that federal officials normally use to track the deceased, according to the two people familiar with the moves and their ramifications.

They spoke on condition of anonymity Thursday night because the plans had not yet been publicly detailed.

The officials said stripping the immigrants of their Social Security numbers will cut them off from many financial services and encourage them to "self-deport" and abandon the US for their birth countries.

It wasn't immediately clear how the 6,000-plus immigrants were chosen. But the Trump White House has targeted people in the country temporarily under Biden-era programmes, including more than 900,000 immigrants who entered the US using that administration's CBP One app.

On Monday, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) revoked the legal status of the immigrants who used that app.

They had generally been allowed to remain in the US for two years with work authorisation under presidential parole authority during the Biden era, but are now expected to self-deport.

Meanwhile, a federal judge said Thursday that she was stopping the Trump administration from ordering hundreds of thousands of Cubans, Haitians, Nicaraguans and Venezuelans with temporary legal status to leave the country later this month.

A representative from the Social Security Administration did not respond to a request for comment on the news that living immigrants were being classified as dead.

The agency maintains the most complete federal database of individuals who have died, and the file contains more than 142 million records, which go back to 1899.

The Privacy Act allows the Social Security Administration to disclose information to law enforcement in limited circumstances, which includes when a violent crime has been committed or other criminal activity.

DHS and the Treasury Deprartment signed a deal this week that would allow the IRS to share immigrants' tax data with Immigration and Customs Enforcement for the purpose of identifying and deporting people illegally in the US.

The agreement will allow ICE to submit names and addresses of immigrants inside the US illegally to the IRS for cross-verification against tax records.

The acting IRS commissioner, Melanie Krause, who had served in that capacity since February, stepped down over that deal.

In March, meanwhile, a federal judge temporarily blocked a team charged with cutting federal jobs and shrinking the government led by billionaire Elon Musk from Social Security systems that hold personal data on millions of Americans, calling their work there a "fishing expedition."

Skye Perryman, president and CEO of Democracy Forward, an advocacy group that has challenged various Trump administration efforts in court, said her organization would likely sue over the Social Security numbers as well, once more details become available.

"This President continues to engage in lawless behaviour, violating the law and abusing our systems of checks and balances," Perryman said. —*PTI*

The DHS revoked the legal status of the immigrants who used that app ***PHOTO: PTI***

LETTERS

write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

Pakistan expels over 8,000 Afghan citizens in migrant crackdown

Islamabad had previously called on all Afghan nationals without proper documentation to return home voluntarily by 31 March or face deportation ***PHOTO: PTI***

The Taliban regime in Kabul is decrying Pakistan's drive to repatriate Afghan nationals, calling it a "forced deportation" which violates Islamic principles.

Pakistan has expelled over 8,000 Afghan citizens in a single week as part of a new repatriation initiative, according to the UN refugee agency UNHCR.

Islamabad had previously called on all Afghan nationals without proper documentation to return home voluntarily by 31 March or face deportation. At the same time, the Pakistani authorities announced they will be canceling some 800,000 Afghan Citizen Cards which they had issued and urged the Afghan card holders to leave as well.

Authorities have established refugee centers in several cities to accommodate Afghan nationals before they are transported to the Torkham border crossing in northwestern Pakistan.

"The situation has escalated, with police actively searching neighborhoods and streets in cities and villages for Afghan citizens, particularly in Sindh and Punjab provinces," Moniza Kakar, a lawyer working for refugees' advocacy in Pakistan, told DW.

Kakar said that midnight raids were common, often leading to families being separated.

Human rights activist Ezatullah Bakhshi is currently hiding from the Pakistani authorities. He told DW that he had already been arrested twice since arriving in Pakistan and registering as a refugee in July 2023.

"They have threatened to deport me back to Afghanistan, which puts my life at serious risk due to my human rights activities," Bakhshi told DW.

"The first time I was arrested, I spent three days in detention before being released after paying a bribe. The second arrest lasted five days. In both instances, the police were aware of my background and the risks I would face if deported," he said.

For decades, Pakistan had served as refuge for Afghans fleeing from wars or oppressive regimes in their own country. The latest major wave of refugees came in following the Taliban's return to power in 2021. Official estimates put the total number of Afghans who fled into Pakistan since the 1980s at around 4 million.

But Pakistan now faces security challenges on the border and worsening ties with the Taliban regime in Kabul, which also fueled anti-Afghan sentiment in Pakistan. Pakistani officials have mounted a series expulsion and deportation drives since 2023, largely ignoring protests by the UN and human rights groups, as well as potential risks for anti-Taliban migrants returning to Afghanistan.

Now, the UN refugee agency believes about three million Afghan nationals still reside in the country, with approximately 1.4 million holding proper documentation.

At the same time, the Taliban regime also criticized Islamabad's stance, referring to the latest crackdown as "forced deportation."

"There is no doubt that the forced deportation of Afghan migrants and this unilateral action is against all international, Islamic, and neighborly principles," Abdul Motalib Haqqani, a spokesman for the Taliban-run Ministry of Migration and Repatriation, said in a statement on Tuesday.

"Since this matter concerns two countries, it is essential to work on a mutually agreed mechanism to ensure the dignified return of Afghans to their homeland," he said.

The Afghans remaining in Pakistan face harassment and live in constant fear of arrests.

"During the house-to-house raids in Islamabad last month, I discovered that the police were in our building just as my visa expired," Latifa Yaqoubi, a member of the Women's Freedom Light Movement of Afghanistan, told DW.

"In a panic, I ran towards the fields, not even realizing what I was wearing. Once I felt safe from their sight, I found that I had escaped in slippers and a nightdress. The hardest part was sitting in the fields while people passing by laughed at our situation."

Afghans who arrived in Pakistan following the Taliban's takeover in August 2021 have been relying on visa renewals to stay in the country, a procedure that is costly, uncertain, and often subject to significant delays.

Maria Noori, an activist in hiding, said that the international community needed to act.

"The Pakistani government has reduced visa durations to just one month, creating a new layer of suffering. People are expected to renew their visas monthly, which is financially impossible for many. Imagine a family of eight — how can they afford repeated extension fees when they can barely feed themselves?" she told DW.

Legal experts contacted by DW agree that Afghan activists in Pakistan need urgent help.

"Things look bleak, not just for Afghans living in Pakistan but also for Pakistani activists who are supporting them as both are being harassed by authorities and it needs attention on a humanitarian basis," Osama Malik, a legal expert on refugee rights, told DW.

"Most of the Afghans in Pakistan are not supporters of the Taliban, and quite a few of them have previously worked with NATO forces, foreign NGOs etc. They are therefore at an increased risk of persecution at the hands of Afghanistan's de facto rulers," he added.

Ezatullah Bakhshi, the head of the Institution of Civil Society and Human Rights in Afghanistan, knows what to expect if he is ever sent back across the border. Before the two arrests in Pakistan, he was jailed by the Taliban due to his efforts to support marginalized communities. He said the Taliban will "likely" execute him. —*DW News*

PHOTO: X

2 feared trapped as tunnel collapses in South Korea

SEOUL, 11 APRIL

Two workers are feared trapped as a subway tunnel under construction at Gwangmyeong, a city near Seoul, collapsed on Friday, officials said. The National Fire Agency said authorities were mobilising 55 rescue workers and 18 vehicles to rescue possible victims. Gwangmyeong city officials said workers were evacuated from the site and traffic stopped around the area after receiving reports that a ventilation shaft at the site was at a risk of collapse. The officials said it wasn't immediately known whether any workers re-entered the site. *—PTI*

S Korea establishes diplomatic ties with Syria

SEOUL, 11 APRIL

South Korea has established diplomatic relations with Syria's new Islamist government, Seoul's foreign ministry said on Friday, months after a rebel coalition ousted President Bashar Assad, who had maintained close ties with North Korea. South Korean Foreign Minister Cho Tae-yul travelled to Damascus on Thursday to sign a joint communique with Syrian Foreign Minister Asaad al-Shaibani, establishing formal diplomatic relations. The ministry said it opens new opportunities for bilateral cooperation previously hindered by Syria's "close ties with North Korea." During talks, Tae-yul conveyed Seoul's willingness to support Syria's reconstruction efforts following the 13-year civil war. Al-Shaibani welcomed the prospect of South Korean contributions to Syria's reconstruction and expressed hope for Seoul's support in easing international sanctions on Damascus, the ministry said. *—PTI*

Over 100 Imran supporters arrested in Pak

LAHORE, 11 APRIL

Over 100 activists of Pakistan Tehreek e-Insaf (PTI) party have been arrested for staging rallies across Punjab province to demand jailed former prime minister Imran Khan's release and condemn the toppling of his government three years ago, police said on Friday. The PTI's Punjab chief organiser Aliya Hamza Malik said that despite all hurdles, Khan supporters managed to come out on the roads to express solidarity with him and protest against the change of his government through a local and foreign conspiracy. "Over 100 PTI leaders, workers, and supporters have been arrested on Thursday," Malik said. She said the puppet government illegally incarcerated Khan and that the PTI workers would not rest till his release. *—PTI*

Taliban militant among two killed in Pakistan

PESHAWAR, 11 APRIL

One of the most wanted terrorist commanders of the Tehreek e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) group was among the two militants killed in Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, police said on Friday. The police said it intercepted terrorists travelling on a bike in Lower Dir district on Thursday after receiving intelligence about the presence of TTP fighters in the vicinity. One of them was identified as Hafeezullah alias "Kochwan". According to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Counter Terrorism Department (CTD), Hafeezullah was a most wanted TTP terrorist and was involved in major terror attacks. He carried a bounty of PKR 5 million on his head, a CTD official said. "Hafeezullah's body has been confirmed, and efforts are underway to identify the other militant," the official said. *—PTI*

Xi urges EU to join China in 'taming' US

Steps up diplomatic efforts in the region to gather support

PHOTO: FREEPIK

BEIJING, 11 APRIL

As China increased its tariffs against US goods from 84 per cent to 125 per cent in a tit for tat move, President Xi Jinping appealed to the European Union (EU) to "jointly resist the unilateral bullying" by Washington.

In his meeting with Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez, Xi urged the EU to work with China to safeguard economic globalisation and the international trading environment.

"Regardless of how the external environment changes, China will remain confident, stay focused, and concentrate on managing its own affairs well," Xi said according to China state run news agency CCTV.

Sanchez said China was an important partner of the EU, and said the EU was committed to open and free trade, upholding multilateralism, and opposing unilateral tariff hikes.

The EU meanwhile fears its single market will be flooded with cut-price Chinese imports looking for a home and has vowed to take measures to stop this from happening.

Trump's pause on the EU and other countries, including India, caught Beijing unawares as it was hoping to mobilise global opposition to Trump's tariffs.

"We are prepared to use every tool in our trade defence arsenal to protect the EU," Hong Kong based South China Morning Post quoted EU Trade Chief Maros Sefcovic as saying.

"The successive imposition of excessively high tariffs on China by the US has become nothing more than a numbers game, with no real economic significance. Under pressure from China and other parties, the US has temporarily postponed the imposition of high reciprocal tariffs on certain trading partners. This is merely a symbolic and minor step, but it does not change the fundamental nature of the US's use of trade coercion to pursue its own interests." a spokesperson for China's Commerce Ministry said in a statement.

—PTI with agencies.

- Trump's pause on the EU and other countries, including India, caught Beijing unawares as it was hoping to mobilise global opposition to Trump's tariffs

Spanish PM seeks stronger ties with China

Madrid, 11 April

Spain's Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez is visiting China on Friday, his third trip to the country in two years as his government seeks to boost investment from the Asian giant amid global economic uncertainty caused by a chaotic US tariff policy.

"A trade war favours no one. We all will lose," Sanchez said after meeting with Vietnamese leaders in Hanoi on Thursday, where he signed commercial agreements ahead of his visit to Beijing.

Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent meanwhile called out Spain for its move toward China, saying on Tuesday that Spain or any country that tries to get closer to China would be "cutting their own throat" because Chinese manufacturers will be looking to dump goods that they can't sell in the US. Spain has been less adversarial toward China than other EU countries. *— Agencies*

US SANCTIONS INDIAN, TWO INDIAN BODIES IN IRANIAN PETROLEUM ROW

/WASHINGTON/ NEW YORK 11 APRIL

The US has sanctioned a United Arab Emirates-based Indian national and two India-based entities operating as part of Iran's "shadow fleet" and involved in shipping Iranian oil.

Jugwinder Singh Brar owns multiple shipping companies that boast a fleet of nearly 30 vessels, many of which operate as part of Iran's "shadow fleet", the US Department of the Treasury said in a statement on Thursday.

In addition to his UAE-based businesses, Brar owns or controls India-based shipping company Global Tankers Private Limited and petrochemical sales company B and P Solutions Pvt Ltd.

"The Iranian regime relies on its network of unscrupulous shippers and brokers like Brar and his companies to enable its oil sales and finance its destabilizing activities," Secretary of the Treasury Scott Bessent said, adding that the US remains focused on disrupting all elements of Iran's oil exports, particularly those who seek to profit from this trade. *—PTI*

JINPING TO VISIT 3 ASEAN COUNTRIES

BEIJING, 11 APRIL

Chinese President Xi Jinping will visit three Southeast Asian countries early next week to strengthen regional cooperation in his first tour abroad after US President Donald Trump slapped 145 per cent tariffs against China's exports intensifying the trade war with Beijing.

Xi will pay state visits to Vietnam, Malaysia and Cambodia from April 14 to 18, the Chinese Foreign Ministry announced on Friday.

All three countries are part of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations with which China had the largest trade amounting to USD 962.28 billion last year, with China's exports totalling USD 575 billion. Many Chinese observers warned the competitive trade nature between China and its Asian neighbours -- since they are all export-driven economies with the US being one of their key markets -- could hinder Beijing's efforts to rally them, a dilemma further compounded by territorial disputes on both land and sea. *—PTI*

From left: German Defense Minister Boris Pistorius, Ukraine's Defense Minister Rustem Umerov and Britain's Defense Secretary John Healey at a news conference at the NATO headquarters in Brussels **PHOTO: PTI**

Britain vows more support for Ukraine

BRUSSELS, 11 APRIL

Britain on Friday announced its military support to Ukraine, as the war-ravaged country's Western backers gathered to drum up more weapons and ammunition to repel Russia's invasion.

A US envoy flew to Moscow to press Kremlin for a ceasefire with Ukraine.

Britain said that in a joint effort with Norway just over USD 580 million would be spent to provide hundreds of thousands of military drones, radar systems and anti-tank mines, as well as repair and maintenance contracts to keep Ukrainian armoured vehicles on the battlefield.

Ukrainian Defence Ministe, Rustem Umerov said a key issue was strengthening his country's air defences.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy renewed his appeals for more patriot systems after a Russian missile attack claimed 20 lives in his hometown last week.

Though Ukraine endorsed a US ceasefire proposal, Russia blocked it by imposing far-reaching conditions.

This has frustrated US President Donald Trump and fuelled doubts about Russian President Vladimir Putin's intention to stop the war.

Observers expect a new Russian offensive in the coming weeks to strengthen Kremlin's hand in the negotiations. *—PTI*

AUS OPPN LEADER ALLEGES BOMB PLOT ON HOME

MELBOURNE, 11 APRIL

Australian opposition leader Peter Dutton confirmed on Friday that his family home, where he lives with his wife and three children on Brisbane's outskirts, had been the target of an alleged bomb plot.

Dutton is campaigning to replace Prime Minister Anthony Albanese in the 3 May elections. Both leaders are accompanied in public by Australian Federal Police (AFP) in their campaigns.

"I'm incredibly grateful to the AFP that my family is kept safe. I've never felt unsafe one day in this job, particularly with the protection from the AFP. It hasn't stopped me from doing anything, and it won't on this campaign," Dutton said in Perth. "This job is about a test of character: Do you have the strength of character regardless of what's thrown at you to deal with the issues and to act in our country's best interests?"Dutton's home had been the target of the alleged plot involving explosives and a drone, unnamed sources told The Australian newspaper on Friday. *—PTI*

Deported CU activist was threat to anti-Semitism drive, says US

United States revoked visas of university students (Representational Image) **PHOTO: X**

NEW YORK, 11 APRIL

The federal government in a memo to an immigration judge hearing of its attempt to deport Columbia University activist Mahmoud Khalil has cited his beliefs as the basis for potential expulsion. The memo signed by Secretary of State Marco Rubio claimed his presence would threaten efforts to combat anti-Semitism in the campus.

Khalil, a 30-year-old legal permanent resident originally from Syria, was arrested on 8 March while protesting against Israel's actions in Gaza. His attorneys have decried the government's memo as a clear attack on free speech, stating, "There is not a single shred of proof that Mahmoud's presence in America poses any threat." The government has yet to produce any evidence linking Khalil to criminal activities or extremist groups.

This case is part of a broader crackdown on pro-Palestinian activists on US campuses. Concurrently, twelve Stanford University students face felony charges for vandalism during a protest against Israel's actions, highlighting the increasing legal risks associated with activism.

In another immigration case, a federal judge has allowed the Trump administration to implement a new requirement mandating that all individuals in the US illegally register with federal authorities. This controversial measure, affecting millions, raises concerns about potential mass deportations. *—PTI*

EMBRYO GOOF UP BAFFLES AUS MOTHER

WELLINGTON, 11 APRIL

An Australian woman unknowingly gave birth to a stranger's baby after she received another patient's embryo from her in vitro fertilisation clinic due to "human error," the clinic said.

The mix-up was discovered in February when the clinic in Brisbane found that the birth parents had one too many embryos in storage, said the provider, Monash IVF. Staff discovered an embryo from another patient had been mistakenly thawed and transferred to the birth mother.

The baby was born in 2024. The company did not divulge details about the parents' identity or the child's custody. *—PTI*

Man behind Nepal's pro-monarchy stir held in India

Durga Prasai **Photo: X**

KATHMANDU, 11 APRIL

Police in Nepal on Friday arrested the main person behind the 28 March pro-monarchy protests in the capital Kathmandu that killed two persons. The Police said in a statement that Durga Prasai, who was involved in the violent protests of Tinkune, Kathmandu, was arrested from Jhapa district bordering India, along with his bodyguard. Prasai was charged with state offence and organised crime.

According to media reports, Prasai was detained in Assam by the local police and handed over to Nepal police, who brought him to Jhapa, where his arrest was formally recorded. However, there was no extradition treaty currently effective between Nepal and India, so the arrest of Prasai in Assam was not disclosed, the report said. The police earlier arrested over 60 people, including general secretary of the Rastriyia Prajatantra Party Dhawal Shumsher Rana and vice-president Rabindra Mishra, for their involvement in the protests. *—PTI*

HOLIDAY GONE WRONG

Siemens CEO, family die in chopper crash

NEW YORK, 11 APRIL

Siemens CEO Agustin Escobar and his family died as a New York city sightseeing helicopter broke apart midair, crashing upside-down into the Hudson River, killing the pilot and a family of Spanish tourists. The victims included Escobar's wife and global manager at an energy technology company Merce Camprubi Montal, their three children and the pilot.

Photos posted on the New York Helicopters' website showed the couple and their children smiling as they boarded the flight on 10 April.

The flight started around 3pm on 10 April, lasting less than 18 minutes. Radar data showed it flew north along the Manhattan skyline and then back south toward the Statue of Liberty. Parts of the aircraft fell into the Hudson River near the shoreline of Jersey City.

Photos on the New York Helicopters' website showed the couple and their children smiling as they boarded the flight on 10 April **PHOTO: X**

Bruce Wall said he saw it "falling apart" midair, with the tail and propeller coming off.

Rescue boats circled the submerged aircraft within minutes of impact near the end of a long maintenance pier for a ventilation tower serving the Holland Tunnel. The mangled helicopter was hoisted out of the water just after 8 pm.

The bodies were also recovered from the river.

The helicopter company's owner, Michael Roth told the media that he was devastated and had "no clue" why the crash happened.

The helicopter was a Bell 206, widely used in commercial and government aviation.

The National Transportation Safety Board will investigate the matter.

Experts suggested that a "catastrophic mechanical failure" might have left the pilot with no chance to save the helicopter. *—PTI*

France mulls recognising Palestinian state: Macron

PARIS, 11 APRIL

Emmanuel Macron **PHOTO: X**

French President Emmanuel Macron has said that the country is considering recognising a Palestinian state as early as June. Politico reported that Macron expressed his intention to recommend Palestinian statehood at a conference co-hosted by France and Saudi Arabia, which will focus on advancing a two-state solution. The move is based on fairness rather than to appease any particular party.

"We must move toward recognition, and we will do so in the coming months... I'm doing it because at some point it will be fair," Politico quoted Macron as saying.

The move followed Israel's resumption of airstrikes on Gaza after it broke a ceasefire agreement, halting humanitarian aid to the region.

The conflict, triggered by Hamas's attack on October 7, 2023, has claimed 1,200 lives, with 250 more taken hostage in Israel and killed 50,000 in Gaza.

France had said it would recognize Palestine only if it advanced the peace process.

Macron's had met Palestinians affected by the conflict during recent his visit to Egypt. "…. Since March 2, there's nothing going into the Gaza Strip -- no water, no food, no medication and none of the injured are coming out," Macron said. *—PTI*

Markets rise nearly 2% as US suspends tariffs on India

Investors rejoice the 90-day suspension of US tariffs

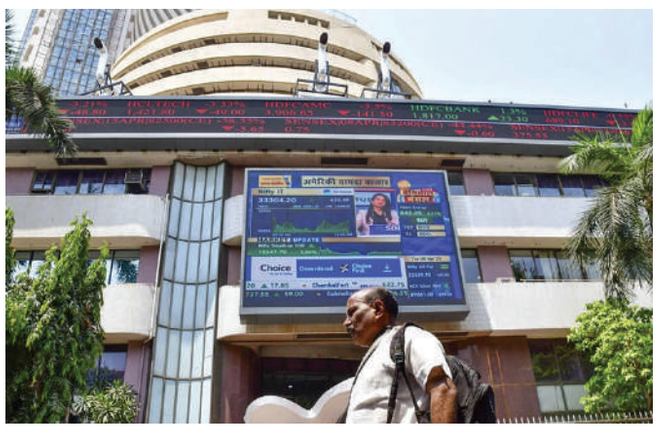
MUMBAI, 11 APRIL

Benchmark Sensex surged by 1,310 points while Nifty closed above 22,900 level on Friday on gains in banking, oil and metal shares as investors rejoiced the 90-day suspension of additional import duties by the US.

Defying a bearish trend in world markets, the 30-share BSE benchmark Sensex jumped 1,310.11 points or 1.77 per cent to settle at 75,157.26. During the day, it soared 1,620.18 points or 2.19 per cent to 75,467.33.

The NSE Nifty surged 429.40 points or 1.92 per cent to 22,828.55. In intra-day trade, the benchmark rallied 524.75 points or 2.34 per cent to 22,923.90.

The US announced suspension of additional tariffs on India for 90 days until July 9 this year, according to the White House executive orders. On April 2, US President Donald Trump slapped universal duties on about 60 countries exporting goods to America and additional steep levies on countries like India, potentially impacting sales of products from shrimp to steel in the world's biggest economy.



Benchmark Sensex surged by 1,310 points while Nifty closed above 22,900 level on Friday **PHOTO: PTI**

Tata Steel was the lead gainer among Sensex shares, rising by 4.91 per cent after the company announced a transformation plan, including job cuts, for its Netherlands steel plant to improve efficiency and margins.

HDFC Bank rose by 2.33 per cent, emerging as the biggest contributor to the Sensex's rise. Reliance Industries, ICICI Bank, Bharti Airtel, Kotak Mahindra Bank, NTPC and Adani Ports were among the gainers.

- Defying a bearish trend in world markets, the 30-share BSE benchmark Sensex jumped 1,310.11 points or 1.77 per cent to settle at 75,157.26. During the day, it soared 1,620.18 points or 2.19 per cent to 75,467.33.

IT behemoth TCS dropped 0.43 per cent after the company reported a 1.7 per cent decline in the March quarter net profit due to lower margins.

Asian Paints declined 0.76 per cent. Commodities surged the most by 3.40 per cent, followed by consumer durables (2.92 per cent), utilities (2.76 per cent), power (2.64 per cent), energy (2.51 per cent), industrials (2.34 per cent) and consumer discretionary (2.25 per cent). *—PTI*

Rupee rises 51 paise to 86.17 against US dollar

MUMBAI, 11 APRIL

The rupee rose sharply by 51 paise against the US dollar to 86.17 in early trade on Friday amid a strong opening in the domestic equity markets, a weakening greenback, and decline in oil prices. The rise in the local unit comes a day after US President Donald Trump suspended the additional 26 per cent tariffs on India till 9 July. At the interbank foreign exchange, the domestic unit opened at 86.22 against the US dollar, up 46 paise from the previous close, before rising further to 86.17. The rupee had closed at 86.68 against the greenback on Wednesday. Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading 0.81 per cent lower at 100.04. Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, rose marginally by 0.08 per cent to USD 63.38 per barrel. *—PTI*

TCS shares trade flat post earnings announcement

NEW DELHI, 11 APRIL

Shares of Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) traded flat on Friday morning after the IT giant reported a 1.7 per cent decline in net profit for the March quarter, impacted largely by margin pressures. Despite a positive start, the stock experienced volatility, rising 1.61 per cent to Rs 3,298.40 on the BSE before slipping one per cent to Rs 3,212.10. It later hovered around Rs 3,243.30, down 0.09 per cent. On the NSE, the stock mirrored this trend, moving between Rs 3,298.95 and Rs 3,210.60. TCS reported a Q4 net profit of Rs 12,224 crore. The company also announced it would defer salary hikes for its 6.07 lakh employees due to business uncertainty linked to tariff challenges. For FY25, net profit rose 4.2 per cent to Rs 48,553 crore, with revenue up six per cent to Rs 2.55 lakh crore. CEO K Krithivasan expressed optimism for FY26 despite ongoing headwinds *—PTI*

Cipla's generic cancer drug gets final approval

NEW DELHI, 11 APRIL

Pharmaceutical major Cipla announced on Friday that it has received final approval from United States Food and Drug Administration (USFDA) to market a generic cancer treatment. The approval is for its Abbreviated New Drug Application (ANDA) for paclitaxel protein-bound particles for injectable suspension (albumin-bound), 100 mg/vial, single-dose. This product is a therapeutic equivalent of Bristol Myers Squibb's Abraxane. The drug is indicated for treatment of metastatic breast cancer, locally advanced or metastatic non-small cell lung cancer, and metastatic adenocarcinoma of pancreas. The firm expects to launch the product in US market in the first half of current financial year. Following the announcement, Cipla's shares rose 2.73 per cent, trading at Rs 1,454.90 each on the Bombay Stock Exchange. *—PTI*

Amazon onboards BRISKPE as PSP to help Indian sellers

MUMBAI, 11 APRIL

Amazon has recognised BRISKPE as a Payment Service Provider (PSP) and authorised it to provide cross-border payments on its marketplace. BRISKPE, backed by global investment firm Prosus, has rolled out the 'Launchpad', a new initiative aimed at transforming how Indian sellers expand globally, payment service provider said in a statement. With this launch, BRISKPE moves beyond just powering payouts to building a full-stack ecosystem that helps sellers scale like global brands, it said. The 'Launchpad' offers Indian Amazon sellers a complete suite of enablers: global shipping partners, tax consultants, marketplace experts, account managers, and compliance advisors, all curated and integrated into one seamless platform. *—PTI*

TARIFFS ON CHINA

Indian products to get competitive in US: GTRI

NEW DELHI, 11 APRIL

Imposition of steep 125 per cent tariffs on China by the US could help Indian products from sectors such as textiles, leather, engineering, and electronics become more competitive in America, think tank Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI) said on Friday.

However, the benefits may be short-lived unless India proactively leverages this breathing space to strengthen its export ecosystem, streamline compliance processes, and enhance engagement with US buyers, GTRI said.

It suggested that the government reintroduce interest equalisation scheme to help small firms with access to cheaper working capital credit and customs expediting shipments. The 90-day suspension of country-specific tariffs, as outlined in the new executive order, offers a small window of opportunity for Indian exporters, GTRI Founder Ajay Srivastava said.

While Chinese goods now face steep tariffs of up to 125 per cent, imports from India will be subject to flat 10 per cent additional duty, significantly lower than earlier punitive rates proposed under the 2 April order. He asked Indian exporters to carefully review the latest US executive order and customs guidelines to understand which products will face new tariffs and which may be exempt and timelines.

According to modifications in order, if a product contains at least 20 per cent US made components, only the non-US portion will be taxed, provided the value breakdown is clearly declared, he said *—PTI*

Equity MF inflow drops 14% in March

NEW DELHI, 11 APRIL

Inflow of equity mutual funds (MFs) dropped 14 per cent to Rs 25,082 crore in March amid continued market volatility.

This was the third consecutive month of decline in inflow in equity funds. The latest fund infusion by investors also marks the 49th consecutive month of net inflows into the segment.

According to data released by Association of Mutual Funds in India (Amfi) on Friday, equity-oriented MFs saw an inflow of Rs 25,082 crore in March, way lower than Rs 29,303 crore in February, Rs 39,688 crore in January, and Rs 41,156 crore in December.

Within the equity fund categories, flexi cap funds recorded the highest inflows in March, attracting Rs 5,165 crore. However, sectoral/thematic funds, which saw a robust inflow of Rs 5,711 crore in February, experienced a sharp drop, drawing in just Rs 735 crore in March.

This significant decline indicates a shift in investor sentiment, with interest moving away from niche sectoral bets towards more diversified and flexible investment strategies.

In March, mid-cap and small-cap mutual funds continued to attract significant investor interest, with inflows of Rs 3,439 crore and Rs 4,092 crore, respectively.

Overall, mutual funds experienced an outflow of Rs 1.64 lakh crore during the month under review as compared to inflow of Rs 40,000 crore in February. *—PTI*

Tesla launches its first showroom in Saudi Arabia

RIYADH, 11 APRIL

Tesla officially launched in Saudi Arabia on Thursday, marking a new chapter in the company's global expansion after Elon Musk's troubled relationship with the kingdom — but the Middle East country's extreme heat could pose a challenge for its electric vehicle performance and battery efficiency.

Musk and Saudi Arabia have had a complicated history. Back in 2018, Musk claimed he had secured funding from the kingdom's sovereign wealth fund to take the company private. That deal never happened, leading to lingering tensions. With launch of its first showroom and service centre in Riyadh, Tesla makes its long-anticipated entry into Saudi market.

The facility will offer models, including Model 3, Model Y and Cybertruck, and pop-up stores are also opening in Riyadh, Jeddah, and Dammam. *—PTI*

Transshipment cargo from B'desh grew by 46% in FY25

KOLKATA, 11 APRIL

Transshipment cargo from Bangladesh for re-export through India grew by 46 per cent between the 2023-24 and 2024-25 fiscals at the Petrapole Land Port in West Bengal's North 24 Parganas district, according to official data.

However, no truck from Bangladesh carrying transshipment cargo for third countries entered through the Petrapole border since 9 April, after the Indian government revoked the facility granted to the neighbouring country in 2020, an official said. In the 2023-24 fiscal, 3,473 trucks carrying 4,733 consignments worth Rs 2,357.27 crore entered India from Bangladesh through Petrapole, according to data provided by the Petrapole Clearing Agents' Staff Welfare Association.

In the 2024-25 financial year, 4,861 trucks transported 7,772 consignments worth Rs 3,446.66 crore, reflecting a 36 per cent increase in truck movement and a 46 per cent jump in cargo value over the previous fiscal, it said. India had allowed transshipment of export cargo from Bangladesh to third countries via Indian land customs stations, and subsequently through Indian ports and airports since 29 June, 2020.

However, on 8 April this year, the Indian government revoked the transshipment facility, leading to the Petrapole customs denying clearance for such third country cargo. Following the decision, Benapole port in Bangladesh returned the first set of four trucks carrying transshipment cargo on 9 April. *—PTI*

Real estate investment rises 74%

NEW DELHI, 11 APRIL

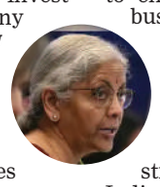
The Indian real estate sector attracted a 74 per cent higher equity funding of around USD 2.9 billion during the January-March period amid strong demand for properties, according to CBRE.

Real estate consultant CBRE data showed that the equity investment inflows in real estate stood at USD 2.9 billion in January-March 2025, registering a 74 per cent year-on-year increase. "Investment inflows were primarily fuelled by developer activity and significant interest from real estate investment trusts (REITs) and institutional investors during the March quarter," it added.

Sharp uptick in capital inflows during the period under review reflects strong fundamentals, robust demand across asset classes, and growing confidence among both domestic and foreign investors, he said. Land/development sites and built-up office assets cumulatively accounted for nearly 74 per cent of total capital inflows in January-March this year. *—PTI*

FM invites Austrian firms to invest in new sectors

NEW DELHI, 11 APRIL



Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Friday urged Austrian companies to invest in India as it offers many opportunities in new and emerging sectors.

Addressing the India-Austria business roundtable in the capital city Vienna, she said Austrian companies should harness many opportunities that India offers as the country has made tremendous progress as a result of the government's efforts in accelerating economic growth and equity as well as reforms to ensure the ease of doing business.

"I also highlighted emerging opportunities in new and emerging sectors such as green hydrogen, electric vehicles, digital public infrastructure and innovation. India is an excellent gateway to Asia and the global south," she said. *—ANI*

'India ready for 1M startups by 2035'

NEW DELHI, 11 APRIL

Infosys co-founder Nandan Nilekani has outlined a bold vision for India's startup future, stating that the country is poised to have one million startups by 2035, a remarkable leap from just 2,000 in 2015.

Speaking at the Carnegie Global Tech Summit, Nandan Nilekani, who is founding Chairman of UIDAI (Aadhaar), said implementing AI at scale in India is built on an existing foundation of digital transformation that has happened for a decade. "All startups have been solving some problems over the years. The important thing is that we have a million of them. In 2015, we had about 2,000 startups. Today, we have 150,000 startups...we (will) have a million startups in 2035," he said.

He explained the powerful momentum behind India's entrepreneurial surge, crediting a "virtuous cycle" that fuels continuous innovation. *—ANI*

Gold skyrockets Rs 6,250, hits a record of Rs 96,000/10g

NEW DELHI, 11 APRIL

Gold prices surged by Rs 6,250 to hit a record high of Rs 96,450 per 10g in the national capital on Friday due to heavy demand from local jewellers and retailers, according to the All India Sarafa Association.

Analysts said gold hitting lifetime high levels in the international markets on strong safe-haven demand amid escalating US-China trade tensions boosted the domestic prices.

- After four days of sharp fall, gold of 99.5 per cent purity surged by Rs 6,250 to touch an all-time high against the previous close of Rs 89,750

On Wednesday, gold of 99.9 per cent purity had closed at Rs 90,200 per 10g. Rebounding after four days of sharp fall, gold of 99.5 per cent purity surged by Rs 6,250 to touch an all-time high of Rs 96,000 per 10g against the previous close of Rs 89,750 per 10g.

Spot gold jumped to a fresh peak of USD 3,237.39 per ounce. Later, it slipped to USD 3,222.04 per ounce.

With the US at the heart of the ongoing trade war, for the long term, gold prices are quite likely to rise. *—PTI*

'BASELESS & UNTRUE'

Byju's founders slam US lawsuit allegations

NEW DELHI, 11 APRIL

Founders of Byju's on Thursday slammed allegations by Glas Trust **PHOTO: X**

Founders of Byju's on Thursday slammed allegations by Glas Trust in a recent US lawsuit as completely "baseless and untrue", saying it is a part of their conspiracy to wrestle control of the company through "possible nefarious means".

Founders of the embattled edtech firm, Byju Raveendran, had recently filed an FIR against the former resolution professional (RP), a trustee representing US lenders, and certain EY employees.

"The allegations made by GLAS in the recent lawsuit are completely baseless and untrue. This lawsuit is a part of their conspiracy to wrestle control of BYJU'S through all possible nefarious means Raveendran said in a statement, which marks an escalation in the spat between the crisis-ridden edtech firm and GLAS Trust Company, which represents certain lenders.

The statement by Raveendran further alleged, "It is nothing but yet another cog in the wheel of lies that GLAS, the illegal representative of disqualified lenders in the US, has been rotating for a long time now."

The statement further accused GLAS of resorting to a strategy of allegedly intimidating the founders and management of Byju's for the last two years revolving around filing a "flimsy and frivolous lawsuit in the US" and then peddling it endlessly to "whitewash their criminal and unethical activities in India".

Meanwhile, in response to Byju's FIR, Glas Trust spokesperson, in an emailed statement to PTI, categorically refuted "the baseless and fabricated allegations" levelled by Raveendran. It described Byju's latest allegations as another desperate act to refuse accountability *—PTI*

Google fires hundreds from Android, Pixel teams

NEW DELHI, 11 APRIL

Alphabet's Google has reportedly laid off hundreds of employees from its Platforms and Devices division, which is responsible for key products including Android software, Pixel smartphones, and the Chrome browser.

This move follows a voluntary exit programme offered to staff in January, according to a report from The Information.

The layoffs are part of an ongoing restructuring effort that commenced last year, when Google merged its Android and Chrome teams into the Pixel and Devices group, overseen by executive Rick Osterloh. At the time of the merger, the combined workforce was over 20,000 employees.

A Google spokesperson confirmed the layoffs, explaining that the restructuring aims to enhance efficiency and agility within the Platforms and Devices team.

"Since combining the Platforms and Devices teams last year, we've focused on becoming more nimble and operating more effectively.

This included making some job reductions in addition to the voluntary exit programme that we offered in January," the spokesperson stated. They also highlighted that hiring continues in the US and around the world.

This latest wave of job cuts follows a broader workforce reduction in 2023, in which Google laid off approximately 6 per cent of its global staff. *—ANI*

Kapila-Crasto pair loses in Badminton Asia C'ships

NINGBO, 11 APRIL

Indian mixed doubles pair of Dhruv Kapila and Tanisha Crasto suffered a straight game loss to Hong Kong's fifth-seeded duo of Tang Chun Man and Tse Ying Suet in the quarterfinals of the Badminton here on Friday. Kapila and Crasto, India's last remaining representatives at the prestigious tournament, lost 20-22, 13-21 to Chun and Ying Suet.Earlier, PV Sindhu, Kiran George and Priyanshu Rajawat, and Hariharan /Ruban Kumar Rethinasabapathi had signed off at the prequarterfinal stage.—*PTI*

PHOTO: X

Nick is 1st Masters competitor to shoot 90 in 10 yrs

AUGUSTA, 11 APRIL

Nick Dunlap had seen some big numbers start creeping into his game before he arrived at the Masters. Nothing could have prepared him for the number of strokes he'd take in 18 holes on Thursday. The 21-year-old Dunlap dropped five shots over his final three holes of an already nightmarish day to post a round of perfect bogey golf, 18-over 90. That made him the first player in a decade, the third under age 50, and the first under age 38 to fail to break 90 at the Masters. Dunlap, his eyes bloodshot and his face ashen as he walked from the 18th green to the scoring room to make his ugly score official, did not speak to reporters afterward. "I've played with him a few times this year, and what a great player, what a great guy," said Robert MacIntyre, whose 75 was the low score in a threesome that also included Billy Horschel (77).—*PTI*

PHOTO: X

Scheffler begins pursuit of 3rd green jacket with 68

AUGUSTA, 11 APRIL

Just a couple of weeks ago, Scottie Scheffler thought his game was not quite as sharp as he would have wanted it. "Sharp" might be a poor word choice given what happened in December. In any case, Scheffler's game looked How should we say it? nicely honed in the opening round of the Masters on Thursday, when the defending champion shot a bogey-free 68 to put himself squarely in the mix. Sheffler made two long birdie putts and a couple of nice saves from bunkers on an Augusta National course that was ripe for some red numbers.—*PTI*

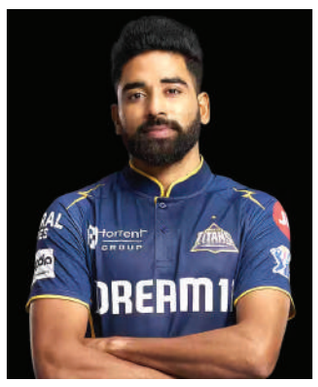
Golf: Bhatia lies 7th, as does Rai, at Masters

AUGUSTA, 11 APRIL

Akshay Bhatia and Aaron Rai, two of the three Indian-origin golfers at the 89th Masters, negotiated the opening day with aplomb to be placed Tied-7th while Justin was in pole position with a round of 7-under 65. Bhatia, Theegala, and debutant Rai put themselves in a good place to cut after a decent first day.Bhatia and Rai carded 2-under 70 and were T-7th and Theegala shot even par 72 to be T-27 as the leader board had a bunch of big names.The top 50 and ties cut.Twice runner-up at the Masters, the 44-year-old Rose, a former US Open winner, equalled his best start at the Masters with a 65.—*PTI*

Pooran will have a Siraj riddle to solve

LSG are currently fifth in a mid-table



Mohammed Siraj and Nicholas Pooran PHOTO: PTI

GT VS LSG

HEAD TO HEAD	
PLAYED:	5
GT Won:	4
LSG Won:	1

GT vs LSG Match starts at **3.30 pm IST**

LUCKNOW, 11 APRIL

The prolific Nicholas Pooran will have his task cut out against a menacing Mohammed Siraj in a battle of equals as table toppers Gujarat Titans take on hosts Lucknow Super Giants in an IPL match here on Saturday.

In sapping Lucknow heat, an enticing battle is likely to ensue since there is not much to choose between the two teams. Titans have won four matches in a row to sit pretty on top of the table (8 points) by a better net run-rate compared to Delhi Capitals, which also has four victories in its kitty.

LSG are currently fifth in a mid-table muddle with six points but it is a side on upward curve at the moment.

In all big battles, the important sub-plots hold the key and in this match, it would be a duel between tournament' top scorer Pooran and Siraj, the best fast bowler on view.

With 288 runs, Pooran is on top of the leaderboard of run-getters, with only one failure in five innings so far. A strike rate of 225 will intimidate any rival captain. Slotted at No.3 by head coach Justin Langer and skipper Rishabh Pant has worked perfectly for him. —*PTI*

> **We asked for good pitches but got challenging ones; we need to talk to the curator**
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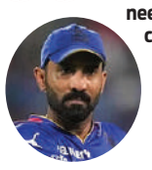
> 
>
> -Dinesh Karthik, Royal Challengers Bengaluru mentor

SRH aim to press reset button against PBKS

SRH's best opening stand so far is a paltry 15

HYDERABAD, 11 APRIL

Desperate to arrest a worrying slide, Sunrisers Hyderabad will be eager to effect a turnaround when they host a power-packed Punjab Kings in their next IPL engagement here on Saturday.

Last season's finalists, SRH, began their 2025 campaign on a thunderous note, racking up a mammoth 286 to dismantle Rajasthan Royals by 44 runs.

With an explosive batting line-up at their disposal, the 'Orange Army' seemed poised to become the first team to breach the 300-run mark but their ultra-aggressive approach has since backfired spectacularly.

Sunrisers Hyderabad will be eager to effect a turnaround PHOTO: PTI

PBKS VS SRH

HEAD TO HEAD	
PLAYED:	23
SRH Won:	16
PBKS Won:	7

PBKS vs SRH Match starts at **7.30 pm IST**

> **All-rounder Corbin Bosch will serve a one-year ban and will not be eligible for selection in next year's Pakistan Super League for pulling out of the tournament to join MI**
>
>
>
> -Pakistan Cricket Board

In their last three matches, their attack-at-all-costs strategy with the bat yielded underwhelming totals of 163, 120, and 152 resulting in crushing defeats, and leaving them languishing at the bottom of the points table. They have worst Net-Run-Rate of -1.629 as of today.

With the bat, Sunrisers Hyderabad need far more from their big names like Travis Head, Abhishek Sharma, Ishan Kishan, and Heinrich Klaasen. —*PTI*

BILLIE JEAN KING CUP

Indian tennis players celebrate their win at the Billie Jean King Cup Asia-Oceania Group I5 PHOTO: X / @AITA_TENNIS

India beat Hong Kong in Asia Oceania Group 1

NEW DELHI, 11 APRIL

The Indian team carried on their winning run at the Billie Jean King Cup Asia-Oceania Group 1, delivering a strong performance to secure a 2-1 victory against Hong Kong, China, here on Thursday evening. The tournament, organized by MSLTA in association with ITF, AITA, and PMDTA, is taking place at the Mahalunge Balewadi Tennis Complex in Pune. India got off to the ideal start on day three, courtesy Vaidehi Chaudhari's splendid performance against Ho Ching Wu, in Indian's first game of the tournament.

The youngster, hailing from Ahmedabad, fought tooth and nail in a tightly contested first set, winning the tiebreak 10-8. She wasted no time to impose herself in the second set, eventually securing a 7-6 (10-8), 6-1 victory in 2 hours and 3 minutes, to give India a 1-0 lead in the tie against Hong Kong, China.

In the second singles match between the two countries, Shrivalli Bhamidipati carried on her fabulous run in the tournament, maintaining a perfect record after three matches. —*PTI*

Salah signs new 2-year deal with Liverpool

LIVERPOOL, 11 APRIL

Egypt forward Mohamed Salah has signed a new two-year contract with Liverpool.

Ending months of uncertainty over his future.

The 32-year-old Salah was one of three key senior players, with Trent Alexander-Arnold and Virgil Dijk, due to be out of contract at the end of this season.

He is the first to extend his stay, having already established himself as a club great with 243 goals in 394 appearances, placing him third in the list of Liverpool's all-time top scorers. —*PTI*

Indian team finishes 2nd overall in ISSF WC

BUENOS AIRES, 11 APRIL

The Indian team finished a creditable second in the year's first ISSF World Cup for rifle, pistol, and shotgun shooters despite the young trap mixed team pair of Lakshay Sheoran and Neeru missing out on a medal by a point in the final event of the tournament here.

After the bronze picked up by the mixed team air pistol pair of Suruchi and Saurabh Chaudhary on Thursday, India's overall tally swelled to eight medals, including four gold, two silver and two bronze, which put them in second position.

China finished on top of the standings with five gold, three silver, and three bronze medals, thanks to a 1-2 in the mixed team air pistol event on the final day. The other gold of the day was picked up by Chinese Taipei in the mixed team trap.

The highlight of India's performance was the gold medals won by Sift Kaur Samra (women's 50m rifle 3 positions), Rudrankksh Patil (men's 10m air rifle), Suruchi (women's 10m air pistol), and Vijayveer Sidhu (men's 25m rapid-fire pistol).

Sidhu became the first Indian ever to win an ISSF World Cup gold in his event.

Also noteworthy was the silver-winning performance in the women's 25m pistol by young Paris Olympian Esha Singh, a reigning mixed team world champion. —*PTI*

Suruchi and Saurabh Chaudhary PHOTO: ISSF

AVANI SHOOTS BOGEY-FREE 68 TO LIE T10TH

CAPE TOWN, 11 APRIL

India's Avani Prashanth fired the best opening round of her rookie season as she opened with a bogey-free 4-under 68 to be Tied-10th at the Investec SA Women's Open here.

Avani had two birdies on either side of the Par-72 course and trailed leaders France's Perrine Delacour and Germany's Aline Krauter by three shots.Tvesa Malik had three birdies in the first holes and then dropped a double bogey. She steadied herself to pick one more birdie on the back nine on the 15th and parred the others for a 2-under 70 and was Tied-32nd.

Diksha Dagar, Pranavi Urs and Tvesa Malik shot an even par 72 each to be Tied-68th. —*PTI*

MONTE CARLO MASTERS

Alcaraz downs Fils to advance into last 4

PARIS, 11 APRIL

Carlos Alcaraz huffed and puffed into the Monte Carlo Masters semi-finals with a 4-6, 7-,5 6-3 victory against local favourite Arthur Fils, who will be ruing his missed chances on Friday.

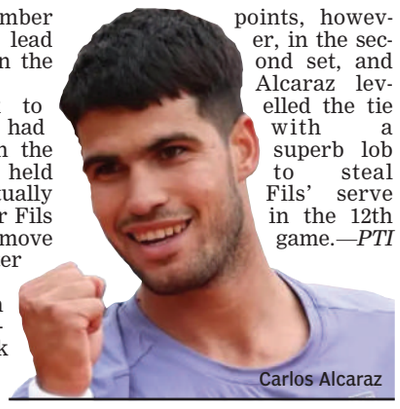
Four-time Grand Slam champion Alcaraz was made to sweat by the world number 15 but made the most of his opponent's errors in the key moments to set up a semi-final against fellow Spaniard Alejandro Davidovich Fokina.

Fils made a blistering start against the world number three, surging to a 3-0 lead with two early breaks in the opening set.

Alcaraz fought back to retrieve one break and had four chances to level in the fourth game, but Fils held firm. The Spaniard eventually drew level at 4-4, only for Fils to break once more and move ahead 5-4 in a rollercoaster set.

The Frenchman wrapped it up after saving another two break points.

He wasted seven break points, however, in the second set, and Alcaraz levelled the tie with a superb lob to steal Fils' serve in the 12th game.—*PTI*



Carlos Alcaraz

BAGAN, B'LURU FACE OFF IN BLOCKBUSTER ISL CUP FINAL

KOLKATA, 11 APRIL

League winners Mohun Bagan will fancy their chances of completing a double, notwithstanding the challenge staring them in the form of a formidable Bengaluru FC side in the final of the ISL Cup here on Saturday.

The match will be played at MBSG's fortress, Vivekananda Yuba Bharati Krirangan (VYBK), with a packed stadium rooting for them, but BFC remain unperturbed as they head into what is expected to be a blockbuster clash.

Mohun Bagan Super Giant coach Jose Molina spoke about not caring about what happened in the past, while BFC gaffer Gerard Zaragoza and captain Gurpreet Singh Sandhu called Kolkata a second home.

Speaking at the pre-match press conference, Molina stressed the importance of looking forward and not worrying about the past."I don't care about what happened in the past.

I am trying to do my best for Mohun Bagan Super Giant. We did well to win the League Shield, and we are motivated to win the ISL Cup too."I don't need extra motivation from the fact that we lost the final last year. We are already motivated enough. —*PTI*

EUROPA LEAGUE QUARTERFINAL

Onana at fault twice as Man United draws 2-2

LONDON, 11 APRIL

Andre Onana, described by Nemanja Matic as "one of the worst goalkeepers in Manchester United's history", was at fault for both goals as his side drew 2-2 at Lyon in a Europa League quarterfinal first leg on Thursday.

Former United midfielder Matic, now a player with Lyon, made the less-than-flattering comments about Onana in a pre-game press conference.

Then, in the match itself, United went 1-0 down after 25 minutes when Onana failed to stop a curling free-kick from out wide by Thiago Almada. Leny Yoro equalized for the visiting team in first-half stoppage time, with a header after goalkeeper Lucas Perri had cleared a Bruno Fernandes free-kick.

Rayan Cherki scores for Lyon against Man United goalkeeper Andre Onan PHOTO: X / @MANUTD

Fernandes then sent a precise cross for substitute Joshua Zirkzee to head what seemed to be the winner in the 88th minute.

But Rayan Cherki hit back for Lyon when he pounced on the rebound after Cameroon international Onana had spilled an effort from Georges Mikautadze.

"I think this is the worst moment to concede a goal like that," Yoro told TNT Sports. "We were winning 2-1. I think away this was a good score, but we go with a draw and we try to win the game at home."

Winning the Europa League, as United did in 2017, is rewarded with a spot in the Champions League, something the club is highly unlikely to achieve through its current 13th-place position in the Premier League. —*PTI*

South America proposes 64-team 2030 World Cup

BUENOS AIRES, 11 APRIL

Alejandro Dominguez, the president of South American soccer's ruling body CONMEBOL, made an official proposal on Thursday to expand the men's 2030 World Cup from 32 teams to 64.

FIFA is aware of the proposal that was first introduced last March by a delegate from Uruguay during an online meeting of the ruling council of world soccer's governing body.

"We are convinced that the centennial celebration will be unique because 100 years are celebrated only once," Dominguez said during his opening speech at CONMEBOL's 80th Ordinary Congress.

The 2030 World Cup is already set to be the most sprawling edition with six host nations spread across three continents.

Uruguay was the original World Cup host in 1930 and is scheduled to stage one game. Paraguay, Argentina, Spain, Portugal, and Morocco are also co-hosts. —*PTI*